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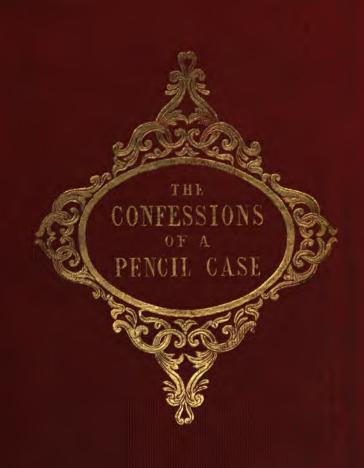
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THE

CONFESSIONS

OF A

PENCIL-CASE,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

COLLATED AND REVISED

BY J. J. REYNOLDS.



List! a brief tale :-KING LEAR.

LONDON:

T. & W. BOONE, 29, NEW BOND STREET.

1847.

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THE LOVERS OF LIGHT READING,

This Little Bolume

15

MOST HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.



A PREFATORY LINE FROM THE PENCIL-CASE.

THE following was found with the other manuscripts of the Pencil Case:—

"Should any Writer in his researches for a subject whereon to exercise his ingenuity stumble upon these my papers, let me beg of him not to consider that he confers the least obligation upon me by undertaking the task of preparing them for publication; since I very well know, unless he had an aim of his own in view, he would not trouble himself in the matter. I would also request him not by any means to dub himself their author, as I shall then be alone answerable for any blame attaching thereto.

"These pages contain a brief history of the leading events in my life, interspersed with a few passing observations of my own. Some of these may be right, others wrong; but, as all of us are fallible, I rely on the kindness of my readers, trusting they will laugh, condole, and sympathize with me, by turns, during the progress of my story."

The above, though written by the Pencil-Case in rather a whimsical spirit, we here insert by way of introduction to his "Confessions."

J. J. R.



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THE

CONFESSIONS OF A PENCIL-CASE.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

CHAP. I.

EXCUSES FOR WRITING — EARLY REMINISCENCES—
AND ENTRANCE INTO PUBLIC LIFE.

UMBRELLAS have related their manifold adventures, keyholes have confessed many a hidden secret; why then should not I, a Pencil-case, favour the world with the benefit of my experiences?

"A very good reason why you should not," I hear one of my readers exclaim, (for surely I may be allowed to calculate on the plural number.)—"A very good reason why," he repeats, "good Mr. Pencil-case, since you do not fill such a prominent situation in the world, and are not so much mixed up in its turmoil and bustle. Lying idle, as you do.

half your time in the recesses of a pocket, you cannot have so much of interest to communicate; you cannot inform us of anything whereby we may be rendered wiser for the future."

"Undeniable arguments, doubtlessly," I reply; "but allow me to ask in return, whether it is not the custom for many among human kind, with the cacoethes scribendi upon them, and at a loss to know what to write about, to begin chronicling the doings of some fellow-man little known to fame, who, perhaps, once in his life perpetrated some action worthy of record; and do they not publish it, and call the rant a history, and are not such productions often well received?" "Assuredly," I hear him reply. Then, I rejoin, following so worthy an example, I proceed without further apology to perform my self-allotted task.

When, in all the brilliancy of newness, I issued a perfect pencil-case from the hands of the artificer, my abode was a glass-case on the counter of a shop, kept by one Solomon Metal, watchmaker, silversmith, and jeweller, of the town of W——, in the county of

8---. My master, to his honour be it spoken, was as honest a tradesman as ever retailed an article. He never by any chance availed himself of those numerous opportunities to cheat a customer, which his occupation offers to the crafty. Pinchbeck did not assume the nature of sterling gold, common crystals were not suddenly metamorphosed into diamonds of the first water, neither were particles of green bottle-glass changed into valuable emeralds at the magical utterances of his tongue. No, he set a fair price on his goods, and never dreamt of abating. The consequence was Mr. Solomon Metal did not drive "the roaring trade," which less honest and conscientious folks do. Nevertheless, he had a comfortable business, and, no doubt, put a comfortable sum by for a rainy day out of his incomings. As to my own personal appearance, I was always remarkable for plain solid beauty and the purity of the metal composing me. Chasings, carvings, embossments, and other extrinsic deceptions did not in my case take the place of intrinsic excellence and worth. Perhaps I am rather too large for the fashion of the

present day, and might be pronounced a leetle antiquated by the side of these modern gimcracks, things which appear to me more for ornament than use, which to touch is to bruise. Poor little vamp'd up starvelings! Ah! how pencil-cases have degenerated since the days "when I was young!" And here I may remark, that not only has my race been on the decline, but all our other companions of the pocket besides. Look at your modern watches-little thin gingerbread things that they are-no more to be compared to the stout old time-pieces of former years than Stilton is to round Dutch; seals, keys, knives, snuff-boxes, and purses, all seem to be growing more diminutive daily. As to these last articles, however, I am not quite so much surprised at their becoming smaller, for certes, folks have not the wherewith to fill them that they used to have. Those ridiculously misnamed things called "everpoints" by the Queen's royal letters patent, they were unknown then; and those vulgar pretenders, those upstarts, those jackdaws in peacock's feathers-(how it makes my blood boil to mention their names!)-albatas, are

quite a modern innovation, unworthy of the name of pencil-case, a kind of half-bred things, with their trumpery double slides, steel pen-holders, toothpicks, How I scorn the lot! And yet I have had the misery—yes, I! as fine, portly a specimen of the pencil-case tribe as ever eye rested on or hand guided-to lay cheek by jowl with one of them. To tell the truth they are hourly on the increase, and I shudder to think what is to become of the high-born family to which it is my pride to belong. The only reason I had to be dissatisfied with myself in early life was, that my fashioner had not destined me for a lady's instead of a gentleman's pencil-case; although perchance as the servant of a "lord of the creation," I have seen more of this wonderful world we live in. and had nobler duties to perform, still there must be to my fancy a pleasure in being the chosen attendant of one of those who have been justly designated by a fellow-scribbler of mine, "the porcelain clay of human kind," which would amply compensate for any advantages which, as a masculine pencil-case I have in my public life enjoyed.

I will not name the price my master set upon me lest I should be charged by my readers with egotism, or what is worse, with falsehood. Suffice it to say that my handsome proportions attracted the notice of many, and that it was this alone which deterred them from purchasing. So often, indeed, was I removed from my glass habitation, handled, turned over, and admired, but finally replaced, that I sometimes despaired of ever knowing more of the great world around me than the little knowledge I could gather in the narrow sphere of Mr. Solomon Metal's establishment. At other times I became quite contented and happy in retirement when I reflected on the buffets and rough usage it would be my fate to undergo when the slave of another.

My master's shop was a favourite resort for many idle people of W——; not a morning passed but some half dozen dropped in, sat each for an hour gossiping without expending a sixpence, and then made themselves scarce. As their conversation had nothing whatever to elicit my particular attention, I shall not introduce into these, my confessions, any reminis-

cences respecting them, trusting I shall in their course hit on more interesting topics.

It chanced, as I was cogitating one day on what my future avocations might be, that a chaise and pair drew up at the shop-door, whence a lady and gentleman alighted and entered the shop. The former was young and lovely to behold, and though sufficiently, to all appearance, the junior of him who accompanied her and on whose arm she leant to be his daughter, it was evident from the wedding-ring on her finger and their manner towards each other that she was his wife. It was an ill-assorted match, for the old man was a grey headed, wrinkled-faced piece of humanity, with a sinister look about his little grey eyes which, from his first entrance, made me dislike him. This dislike was not by any means diminished by his subsequent behaviour. "Shew me some rings," said the lady to my master, in a sweet tone of voice.

Immediately a satin lined case of these articles was drawn from my side and placed before her. She was some time in making choice: at length she fixed on a handsome diamond one, and turning her sweet eyes to her husband, timidly asked his approval. The old man, who the whole time had been fumbling and chinking his money in his pocket, vouchsafed her no answer, but, turning to Mr. Metal, peevishly inquired the price.

"Ten guineas," was the reply. "Ten guineas!" he echoed. "And do you think, child," said he, turning to his wife, "I have ten guineas to throw away thus?—why, I should soon be ruined by your extravagance. Ah! this comes of marrying a giddy young girl."

To this rough address the lady replied not a word; but I could see a tear glistening on each eyelid. She raised her pocket handkerchief to her face and turned her head away. This made no impression on her companion; muttering something about people taking airs, he carelessly requested to see some pencil-cases. As the question escaped his lips a tremor passed through my whole frame. I dreaded the idea of serving so heartless a being, with no higher employment, mayhap, than that of calculating when interests

became due, or how a paltry penny could be saved in housekeeping. I need not, as the upshot proved, have entertained any fears for the event, for he chose the very shabbiest and cheapest of my companions; then, hastily leading his tearful wife to the carriage, the pair drove rapidly away. The extreme beauty of the lady, and her apparently unhappy lot, excited my deepest sympathy. I ardently longed to know whom and what she was. As chance would have it, my desire was soon fulfilled; for one of Mr. Metal's gossiping acquaintances entered at the moment.

"Did you notice the carriage at my door just now?" asked my master, who evidently wished, as much as myself, to learn something more concerning his late customers.

"Oh! yes, yes," said the other, "it belongs to Mr. and Mrs. B——, who have lately taken Willow Lodge. A newly married couple, they say."

"Indeed," observed Mr. Metal. "The lady seems very young."

"Very. A forced match, I believe. Her relations, being but poorly off, anticipated great things for her from old B——'s riches; and now, it seems, he treats her as a mere piece of household furniture, instead of as a young and lovely wife should be treated.'

"Ah!" ejaculated Metal, "too true it is,

'Crabbed age and youth
Cannot live together;
Youth is full of pleasance,
Age is full of care,'

as Will Shakspere says. Poor creature! how I pity her."

And so did I; and long was it ere I could drive her memory from my thoughts. Nothing, however, tended so much to do this as the exchange of ownership I shortly afterwards underwent.

A bustling little gentleman rattled into the shop one day, and inquired for some pencil-cases. As fate would have it, he fixed upon me. My master was proceeding to wrap me up in the usual quantum of silver paper, when my new owner cried, "Ne-ne-ver mind that. Let me have it."

Bidding, therefore, a hasty adieu to my old friends of the glass-case, I was slipped into his pocket, and thus commenced my public career.

CHAP. II.

INTRODUCING THE READER MORE FULLY TO MY LATE PURCHASER, AND SHEWING HOW THE GREAT GAS QUESTION WAS SETTLED.

My new master had not proceeded far from Mr. Metal's door, ere he drew me from his pocket, as I thought, to take the opportunity of bestowing (excuse my vanity, gentle reader) a meed of admiration on his new purchase; but, alas! I was mistaken, since it was positively for no other reason than to play with me, and push my slide up and down with the thumb and finger of his left hand, thereby exposing me, unprotected, to all the rawness of a foggy February morning. The only excuse I could find for such cruel conduct towards me, who had been hitherto accustomed to the most careful treatment, was my

master's total absence of mind; in fact, he appeared not in the least to know what he was about. With his other hand inserted in his coat pocket, his hat over his eyes, and his gaze intently fixed on the ground, he hurried on, oblivious to all that was passing around him. Now and then he would utter, half aloud, some such broken sentences as the following:—"Must be successful;" "Carry my point;" "Darkness visible," &c.; all which were quite unintelligible to me at the time, but which subsequent events fully explained.

At length I fairly slipped from his hand down on the cold, hard paving stones, and thus within about ten minutes from the commencement of my public life, received the first of the many bruises that my shattered form now exhibits. So little did my owner know what had happened, that he walked on as before, absorbed in thought, and unconcerned at his loss. "Ah," thought I, "if this is a sample of the life I am destined to lead, would I had never quitted good old Metal's glass-case." Already did I imagine myself the inmate of the dirty, ragged pouch of one

of those squalid little urchins I had often seen gazing at the fine things in our shop-window. But thanks to the presiding genius of pencil-cases, such was not my fate. I was picked up by an individual in genteel attire, who had witnessed the untimely event. Hastening after my master, and tapping him on the shoulder, he said, "Why, Smithson, what are you about? you've dropped your pencil-case, and are now indebted to my honesty for returning it."

"Oh, thank'ee, thank'ee," said my master; then, looking up for the first time, cried, "What, Gray, is it you? Ah! how d'ye do—you'll remember seven o'clock?"

"Seven o'clock?" echoed the other; "Ah, the meeting—good—I'll be there punctually."

"And don't forget to bring your friends Clarke, Wilson, and Smith, with you. By-the-bye," continued my master, "do you think we shall be victorious?"

"Every prospect," was the reply; "but I must be off-good day."

"Good day," said my master; and on he posted as

before, never halting again until he arrived opposite a respectable-looking house, with a slip of garden-ground in front, fenced off from the street by some iron railings. This was his own residence, and while he is waiting at the front door for admission, I will give my readers some further insight as to whom and what he was—first observing, that I am now writing from information obtained in the sequel.

My master, then, be it known, was distinguished from the rest of the inhabitants of the world by the not very extraordinary name of Jonas Smithson. At W—— he was born; at W—— he had been educated, apprenticed, and settled; and, fortune permitting, it was his intention that the burial-ground of the parish church of W—— should be his last resting place: consequently, W—— and himself were most intimately connected. He had formerly been a draper in the town, but having succeeded in scraping together a sufficiency of this world's pelf, he had retired from the counter, as he said, to make way for young beginners. The world, however, which is always ready to find hidden motives for every action,

maintained that this was not so much his object as that of becoming a leading man among his fellowtownspeople, which, as long as he and the shop were buckled together, he might in vain seek to be. Be this as it may, Mr. Jonas Smithson thenceforth mixed himself up greatly in all public matters at W---. He sat on committees out of number, was a member of every institution in the place, presided at no end of dinners, and headed subscription lists for innumerable purposes; in short, there was nothing of importance done at W--- in which he was not in some way concerned either for or against. His co-operation was most desirable, his opposition a thing to be dreaded. Of course he had his enemies -all public men have; but he had likewise staunch supporters, who looked upon him in affairs of moment as a complete oracle, to differ from whose opinion was absolute treason.

With regard to his outward man, I must admit he was rather a diminutive specimen of the human race; perhaps he was little and good, perhaps not; at all events, if he was evil, there was not much of it—that

is to say, if good and evil are meted in proportion to corporeal size. He had a meagre face, ornamented with a sharp, prominent nose and pursy little mouth, no whiskers, and but a scanty allowance of hair on his cranium; his age, I should say, was about fifty. With the additional information that he was a bachelor, and that his family consisted of, besides himself, an old dame, who united in herself the offices of housekeeper and chef de cuisine, and also a maid of all work—which last-mentioned individual replied to her master's rat-tat by admitting us into the house—I shall conclude this introduction of the reader to my new master.

The parlour to which we betook ourselves was certainly not large in proportions, but it was snug withal, and neatly furnished. In the centre of the room stood a round library table, on which lay a confused mass of writing materials and books; by its side was a most inviting easy chair, in which Mr. Jonas Smithson forthwith ensconced himself. His first act was to bring me forth to light once again, and point my pencil with his knife; having done this,

he gave a glance of approval (which removed the unfavourable opinion I had previously formed of him), and commenced making long extracts from books, calculations, &c. He had been thus engaged for some time, when a sudden thought struck him. "Well, really, I quite forgot to tell Mrs. Sims I had a friend coming to dine with me to-day," he exclaimed aloud (as I afterwards found was frequently his habit), and followed it up by ringing the bell.

"Mrs. Sims," said he, before that personage was well in the room, "I shall dine at five to-day, and lay for two, as I expect a gentleman here to dinner."

Mrs. Sims, who wore very rubicund cheeks and a prodigiously high cap, replied with a curtsey, and left the room, if the truth were known, in a terrible pucker, for it was then hard upon four o'clock, and she had planned nothing else for her master's dinner but the cold joint of the previous day.

A few minutes after, a knocking at the front door was heard, and Mr. Smithson's expected visitor was introduced. The usual salutations over, the pair busily engaged themselves with pens and ink, accompanying their labours with rapid conversational question and answer. Hence I learnt that the stranger was connected with a gas company in some neighbouring city, that there was to be a meeting that night at W-, on the subject of introducing gas into its streets, and that my master had espoused the cause warmly, indeed that he was the chief promoter. The other, it appeared, had come to aid my master in his design of storming the great wall of prejudice and obstinacy in favour of the old system of lighting the town with oil. Having arranged all matters for the attack, five o'clock came, and the duo seated themselves to partake of the substantials Mrs. Sims had provided. They afterwards inquired deeply into the nature of certain liquids, which appeared when the cloth was removed, until nearly seven, when Mr. Jonas Smithson rose to attend the meeting, which it seemed was only one of committee, it having been agreed that his companion should hold himself in readiness for a summons in case affairs should require his presence.

In the committee-room seven or eight other per-

sons had already assembled. Some of these, on my master's entrance, shook hands with him warmly, while the rest only gave him a cold nod of recogni-I divined immediately that these belonged to the opposition—the sticklers for the present method of illumination. The whole of the committee, to the number of eighteen, at length arrived, when the business at once commenced by the election of a chairman, which was done, strange to say, unanimously. Silence being obtained, this officer rose and explained to the meeting for what purpose its members were then and there assembled; he trusted that every speaker would be granted an impartial hearing, and that whatever might be the result of their deliberations, it would be such as their fellow-townsmen would approve of, and they themselves might not at any future time have cause to regret. This prologue ended, my master, having previously laid me on the table, and placed his papers in order before him, rose to propose the first resolution.

But, good reader, it is not my intention to give anything beyond the heads of the one-hour-and-forty minutes' speech he delivered on this occasion. No; those who may wish to read this memorable piece of oratory may have their curiosity gratified by referring to the W--- prints of the day, which contain a full report of all the proceedings relative to "the great gas question." My master commenced by stating that they were that evening met for the formal settlement of a matter of the largest importance to the town of W-, viz., whether gas should be introduced for the purpose of lighting it or not. He begged of his hearers to dismiss all prejudice and preconceived opinions—to give to the subject the deliberation which its nature merited. He next depicted, in a laughable style, the miserable darkness in which they then lived. The oil-lamps now in vogue, he remarked, were just sufficient to show the lampposts, to enable a thief to rob you, and then guide his footsteps so as to elude pursuit. He then, by means of his papers, brought forward numerous calculations, proving at how small additional expense this ridiculous state of things could be changed. Other places, he observed, had adopted gas, and he saw no reason why his native place should be behind hand. If the inhabitants would stand in their own light, it was no fault of his. He had done his duty in bringing the subject repeatedly before them. He finally thanked his brother committee-men for the patient hearing he had been granted, and would now propose the following resolution, which, I may mention, had been written out by me in the morning:—

"Resolved, that the present system of lighting the town of W—— being insufficient, it is expedient that the same be effected by means of gas, and that measures be forthwith taken for the attainment of that object."

My master having resumed his seat, the resolution was immediately seconded by a friend near him, who stated that he had at one time entertained a strong prejudice against the introduction of gas, but now that time had proved it far superior to any other method of illumination, he gave the measure his most cordial support. After the able speech of Mr. Smithson, he could say nothing which might have weight with those present, but would briefly second the re-

solution just read, a resolution he hoped to see carried nem con.

This gentleman had scarcely concluded ere a person on the other side the table, evidently but slightly acquainted with the subject, rose and begged to know whether gas was not considered dangerous—whether the pipes of conveyance were not liable to burst, with other equally crude remarks, much to the amusement of my master and his friends. Their smiles, however, were speedily evaporated by another opposition man getting on his legs and making a charge or "interested motives" against Mr. Smithson. He wondered how any set of men could listen so patiently to the yarn which had been inflicted on them. What right had they to rely on the facts and figures?——

He was here interrupted by my master, who most emphatically denied that he was actuated by any other motive than that of benefiting his native place—a motive which he had always at heart. He would, if they wished, bring a practical man before them to bear him out in all his statements, and was about sending for his dinner companion, when a voice from

the further end of the room cried out, "No committee man;" "Don't admit him;" "Put it to the meeting."

"Put it to the meeting," echoed several others; and so, amidst much confusion, the question of admission was put to the meeting, and negatived. My master now entertained serious doubts for the success of the measure, but his concern arose, let me observe, not so much from the fear of the non-introduction of gas, as the non-triumph of a cause he had espoused.

The Chairman next inquired if any gentleman had an amendment to propose, which was quickly answered by one of the opposition, a person I had remarked as particularly fidgetty during my master's long speech. He said, among other things, that their fathers had done well enough with oil, and that they had hitherto. He saw no reason why the inhabitants of W—— should be saddled with additional rates to answer no desirable end; he, therefore, begged to propose the following as an amendment:—

"That the Committee are of opinion that the

introduction of gas, as a means of illumination, is wholly unnecessary, and signify hereby their decided disapprobation of the measure."

It was seconded by another of the opposition, who laid great stress on the expense, and who hoped it might never be his fate to see gas-lights in W——streets.

The Chairman now put the resolution and amendment to the meeting, when the former was carried by a majority of three, to the infinite gratification of my master and his friends. This result was the signal for most of the losing party to quit the room, when the subsequent resolutions on the subject were carried, as matters of course; and, in brief, within twelve months from that time, W—— was lighted with gas, and in a few months some of its most inveterate opponents acknowledged to its being an improvement—nay, I well recollect the positive, bald-headed gentleman, who had so crustily proposed the amendment in opposition to my master's motion, meeting him one winter evening under one

of the identical lamps, pointing up to it, and vowing that he (Smithson) deserved a piece of plate for his exertions.

And thus, reader, was settled THE GREAT GAS QUESTION.

CHAP. III.

WHICH TREATETH OF DIVERS MATTERS AND THINGS
RELATING TO MR. JONAS SMITHSON, AND INTRODUCES A FRIEND OF HIS TO THE READER.

During the period of my connection with my first master, I spent many similar days to the one described in my last chapter; for, as I have before observed, he was frequently engaged in public matters. Speeches had to be continually framed beforehand, and books extracted from, with my assistance, for this purpose; but my usual routine of duties was of a quite different nature. These I will now describe.

Smithson, be it known, was a most methodical man in his ways, as, from observations I have had opportunities of making, I have discovered that most elderly bachelors are. His breakfast concluded,

it was his custom to draw forth his pocket-book, and, with me, make memorandums in it of things to be attended to during the day. This done, he would don his hat, and proceed to a reading-room, for the purpose of perusing the London papers, and learn thence how the busy world around him went on. He was a politician, was Smithson, and with his silver spectacles on his sharp little nose, and myself on the table before him, he certainly looked particularly profound and studious. Spectacles-I know not how it is—have the faculty of giving a sage appearance to any face. I have often thought how ' much more in character it would have appeared had his portrait been taken thus, than in the ridiculous, formal way he was represented in the picture suspended over his parlour fire-place. Portraits, it strikes me, should resemble, not dissemble. Any one glancing at that of my master would have taken him for an old conceited fop—dressed out, as he was, in a suit of black, gold chain, &c., accoutrements which, to my certain knowledge, he never wore more than half-a-dozen times during our

acquaintance. I do wish artists would see the propriety of depicting people as they are, and not as they appear when clothed for the sitting. Excuse this digression, reader.

From time to time, while perusing the paper, out would come my master's catalogue of mems., and straight I dotted down something therein which struck his fancy, to be treasured up for future use in the tablets of his memory. Afterwards he would gossip with the other frequenters of the room on the topics of the day, and having satisfactorily settled what Ministers ought or ought not to do, he would refer to his memorandums, and set about fulfilling them. It was then Smithson's custom to return home, and here I was again employed in scoring under long passages in books as he read them; some books, in particular, I disfigured thus, while others had not a single dash to mar the whiteness of their margins. I was at first led to believe that these latter were the books my master chiefly prized; but from the fact of their scarcely ever being again taken up for perusal by him, it became evident to me that

they were the very ones about which he cared the least.

The last of my diurnal duties was to enter the disbursements of the day in an account book, to be compared and adjusted with Dame Sims on the Saturday night in each week. It would have made you smile, reader, to have witnessed one of these weekly settlements between Smithson and his housekeeper. The latter, like most females, was no very clever arithmetician; then there was such adding, and subtracting, and calculating to be gone through, before the statement could be properly balanced. Although he did not for a moment suspect Mrs. Sims's honesty, Smithson would have it right to a penny. I have said before he was a very precise, methodical man. Sometimes the provoking account would not come correct; then Mrs. Sims would fidget her apron about, and cogitate aloud-"Let me see; goose on Wednesday, 4s. 6d.; Friday, scrubbing-brush and black-lead, 1s. 4d.; ale on Tuesday," So she would run through all the items of expenditure over and over again in the vain task, until her master had generally to write down a large sum for "sundries," which satisfactorily arranged the matter; but whatever the word "sundries" stood for, from that day to this I never could comprehend.

Mr. Smithson was a bit of an author, too; he sometimes perpetrated an article for the W——Weekly Intelligencer, and now and then some rhymes, on which his friends were pleased to confer the honoured name of "poetry;" still, as few besides his nearest acquaintances ever spoke of them, it is fair to presume the title was misapplied.

My master was one day digesting the *Times* paper alone, in the reading-room before referred to—which, by the bye, was connected with one of the inns of the place—when a stage-coach drew up to the door. Now there was nothing extraordinary in this, for the "light, fast, and elegant 'Highflyer' coach" halted at the same hour every alternate morning; it never was known to be "behind time" more than five minutes but once, and then Tom Tickle, the coachman, gave up the ribbons to another, while he

attended the funeral of a brother chip; but on this identical morning, Smithson fancied he heard a voice that he knew crying out, "Now, porter, that's my carpet bag-off with it at once to the other office."

"Surely," exclaimed my master, "those tones are familiar to me;" and up he went to the window to flatten his nose and chin thereon, in the futile attempt to catch a glimpse of the proprietor of the There were numbers, muffled up in great coats, giving confused directions as to their luggage, but not the person whom he expected to see, for he resumed his seat, and was soon deep in the pith of "the leading article" again. He was, however, shortly aroused by the entrance of another party. Lowering his spectacles to obtain a better sight of this personage, he cried out, "No mistake this. time, however. Well, Jollywink, old boy, how are you? How are you?" he repeated, as he clapped the new-comer on the back, and extended his hand to meet his; "hale and hearty, as usual, I hope?"

"Hearty as ever," replied the person addressed, who, it appeared, answered to the name of Jollywink,

and was the individual whose voice my master had previously recognized. "And how do you do, Smithson? As fond of politics as you used to be, I perceive," continued he, without waiting for a reply.

"Never mind the politics now," said Smithson; but tell me how you left your better half, and what brought you in these parts?"

"Why, as to Mrs. Jollywink, thanks for your inquiries, she enjoys excellent health. Time makes but little alteration in her, as you see he has not in me;" and then he drew his friend's attention to his own portly person and ruddy physiognomy; "and as to the cause of this visit," he continued, "the fact is, business brought me within some dozen miles of W——, so I came on for no other reason in the world but to shake hands with my old friend and school-fellow, Jonas Smithson." So saying, he suited the action to the word.

"Always the same kind-hearted Jollywink," said my master, returning his affectionate pressure.

"But I am off back again to-night."

- "What, and stay only one solitary half-day with me?" said Smithson. "Now, this is too bad of you; come, change your mind this once; consider how seldom we meet."
- "Must return to-night, and that's poz!" (this was Jollywink's favourite expression).
 - "At all events, you will dine with me to-day?"
- "By all means," said the other; "I came with that intention, Joney, and, what's more, anticipate the pleasure of drinking health and long life to you afterwards in a bumper of your 'fine old crusted.'"

Their further conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of some other frequenters of the reading-room, and so they departed, Smithson negligently leaving me on the table, where I had been a silent witness of the above conversation.

"Good bye, Smithson, good bye, Jollywink," I inwardly exclaimed, as the last echoes of their receding footsteps reached my ears; "for never more shall I see either of you:—cruel master! thus to treat your faithful servant and companion—thus to leave me to the sport of fate."

Strange to account, she willed that I should once again be restored to my rightful owner. Many persons visited the room that day, but they were all honest—honest, so far as the non-misappropriation of a pencil-case was concerned. At length, late in the evening, I was recognized by one of the frequenters as "Smithson's," and was immediately posted off by special messenger to my master. Jollywink and he were, on my arrival, cosily seated over the decanters. They were talking of some school-boy freak of their younger days.

"Ah!" said Smithson, "that was a famous joke; what fun we had: but I shall never forget the scrape you got into at the time. Do you recollect the flogging we had?"

"I should rather think I do," observed Jollywink. "Well, say what you like," he continued, after a pause, "there's no time of life like school-boy days."

"Jollywink! you are right. We were very happy then,

^{&#}x27;When the heart danc'd, and life was in its spring,'"

said my master, quoting from some book which I had frequently underlined for him.

"Ha! you were always more book-learned than I was," exclaimed the other; "but I've a good heart, Smithson, a good heart;" and it struck me the old fellow was getting rather sentimental as well as vinous. "But sing me a song, Joney, my boy; this talk gives one the dumps, that's poz;" and filling his glass, he passed the decanter to his friend.

In reply to this request, my master, who did a little in the singing line when in company, chaunted the following, which, as I copied it out for him, I remember sufficiently to present to the reader. "It is one," prefaced Smithson, "that I concocted some time back, and it will suit our present converse well. I have christened it

OLD SCHOOL-BOY DAYS.

OLD school-boy days! we love ye well, When all your hours are past; 'Tis Mem'ry's fond delight to tell Your hist'ry to the last. And when our wand'ring footsteps tread Each well-remember'd scene, We think not of the time that's fled, The years gone by between.

Old school-boy days! how oft we sigh,
When thrall'd by study's chain,
That ye would swiftly hasten by,
And freedom we might gain!
When manhood comes—alas! how sad
To find its fancied joys,
Are naught to those that once we had
When we were merry boys!

In after life, whene'er we meet
An early school-day friend,
Oh! who can tell what mem'ries sweet
Unto our hearts 'twill send!
And still, as track we on to death,
Life's ever-changing ways,
We ne'er forget, while we have breath,
Our happy school-boy days.

Long before the conclusion of this ditty, Jollywink (who had been preparing for a nap, by throwing his handkerchief over his head, and falling back in his chair) was fast in the arms of Morpheus, quite unobserved by my master, whose faculties were so absorbed in his own singing, as not to overhear certain suspicious nasal vociferations from Jollywink, which I never heard issue from a person awake.

Taking into consideration his friend's journey, and being, moreover, so inclined himself, Smithson did not think fit to disturb his slumbers, and was, quickly in a like condition.

But his repose was presently broken by Mrs. Sims, who with some difficulty succeeded in making her master understand that the boots from "the Bell" had come to say "as how 'the Highflyer' was agoing to starf directly, if the gemmen wot own'd the carpet-bag was a passenger." Now Smithson did not, as many less hospitable hosts would have done, inform his friend of the fact, and so get rid of him. Well knowing nothing very urgent required Jollywink's immediate presence at home, he quietly slipped out of the room, and sent the messenger away, sixpence richer than he came, with directions to convey the carpet-bag down there directly.

So "the Highflyer" started on its journey without Jollywink.

CHAP. IV.

CLEARLY PROVING HOW NECESSARY 1T IS, IN MORE SENSES THAN ONE, TO BE WIDE-AWAKE.

I LEFT Jollywink, the sleeping inhabitant of an arm-chair, and the victim of an innocent deception practised on him by his friend. Here for the especial benefit of such of my readers (reckoning again on the plural number,) who, from what I have already written, have not pictured in their imagination a satisfactory Jollywink, I shall take the opportunity of briefly describing him.

He was framed in a mould several sizes larger than my master, the only resemblance between them being a baldness of the cranium. His nose was, as the phrenologists say, fully developed—it was a sensible nose, a nose that scorned the name of "snub" or "turn-up;" and his mouth appeared to have been expanded beyond its natural dimensions, by reason of the immense amount of laughter it had undergone. His middle story must have measured some four feet in circumference, and of course his understandings were on the same noble scale. This tenement of clay usually met the eye in a pepper-and-salt coloured coat and waistcoat, with drab continuations, and knee-gaiters of the like cheerful hue. On the whole, Jollywink made a favourable impression on me. His countenance was straightforward and open. It was one that said, "I can hold myself up before all the world; I care for no one, and am on good terms with everybody."

When he awoke from his nap, the first thing Jollywink did was to say he "felt sleepy;" the second, "that Smithson's song was one of the best he had ever heard."

"Good or not," said my master, "you were asleep long before its conclusion."

"Asleep!" echoed Jollywink. "No! that I

wasn't."—(Like a great many other after-dinner sleepers, he never confessed to the weakness.)

"But suppose," continued my master, "suppose I were to state that you had made no reply to repeated calls on my part, what should you say then?"

"I should only have your word, and that you know is no proof—no proof, Joney!"

"Well, it is of no importance," observed the other, "we will say no more on the matter." And then Smithson pretended to change the subject, but I could see his drift.

"So you are determined to leave me to-night, are you?" he remarked with pretended inquisitiveness.

"Must, and that's poz," said Jollywink. "By-thebye, it must be getting near the time for starting."

"Very near, indeed," said my master, having recourse to his watch and laughing in his sleeve all the while.

Jollywink consulted his time-piece also. "Half-past eight!" he cried. "Poz, and the coach was to start at eight! However, the porter promised to let me know."

"But supposing the porter brought word down half an hour ago, and supposing my housekeeper came in to tell me of the fact, and supposing your carpet-bag is, as in fact it is, snugly deposited in yonder corner. Eh, Jollywink! Have you been sleeping or not?" And my master chuckled and laughed till I thought he would do himself some bodily injury.

Jollywink saw nothing at all facetious in it—
(people at whose expense jokes are played off seldom consider them worthy of a laugh)—indeed he seemed rather offended. "Too bad, a great deal too bad," he replied, "particularly after you had heard my fixed determination."

Smithson, while he observed that his friend's temper was slightly nettled, pretended not to do so. He knew it was much the better way of dealing with a man of his disposition to laugh the affair through, than to notice the bad effects of his harmless trick. "Now, tell the truth, Jollywink," said he, "there was nothing very urgent requiring your presence at home."

"Well, the fact is," rejoined Jollywink, perceiving his friend was determined to keep him in a good humour in spite of himself, "there was nothing; but I had given my word to Mrs. J. to return this evening. My word," repeated he, with a shake of the head, and an emphasis implying that no decree of the most absolute monarch on earth ever commanded greater obedience from his abject subjects than that simply plighted word did of himself.

"No character I admire more," said my master, "than a man of his word. If all acted on your principle, society would be far happier than it is. However, in this instance there are excuses to be made, and whatever blame attaches lay it all on me; my shoulders are broad enough," continued he, laughing and shrugging those members of his frame which all the world knows were not very broad.

"But bear in mind," observed Jollywink, "it is only on one condition that I can grant you my forgiveness."

"Name it," interrupted Smithson, "and by all means I'll abide."

"Not so fast," quoth the other, "for it is a thing I have frequently asked of you, and one which you never would oblige me by doing. For the matter of that it is easily done, if the will would only find a way."

" Name it, name it," again cried his friend.

"Well, the sum of the affair is this, that you make arrangements for a speedy visit to Mrs. Jollywink and myself at 'The Firs,' to stay an unlimited period."

Had the fire-tongs risen from its place by the hearth-side and stood bolt upright before my master, he could not have feigned greater surprise. "My dear fellow," said he, "it is totally impossible. Consider my numerous engagements, my continued"——

"Engagements, a-fiddle!" uttered Jollywink impatiently. "Tis always the way with you people out of business, you concern yourselves so much with affairs which do not immediately concern you, that you leave yourselves no time to call your own. Come you must and shall, as the Calender remarked to Johnny Gilpin."

"No 'must' in the case," rejoined Smithson, reiterating his assurances as to the impossibility of complying with his request.

"I suppose you are as fond of shooting as ever?" said the imperturbable Jollywink.

"Why, yes! I believe the partridges and pheasants have still a determined enemy in me."

"There I have you," cried his friend triumphantly.

"When September comes, this pressing business you speak of will be shelved, and you may as well commence operations on 'the first' at 'The Firs' as anywhere else. True it is a long way from home, but you will meet with plenty of game, warm-hearted friends, and a blithe reception."

Smithson, on this appeal, was obliged to surrender at discretion: the point being arranged to Jollywink's entire satisfaction, the two friends partook of tea, and devoted themselves for the remainder of the evening to what Smithson termed "a quiet rubber at cribbage."

Seven o'clock of the next morning found the pair seated at breakfast, that meal being forwarded on

Jollywink's account; but, poor fellow, there was small enjoyment for him; he was in such a terrible fidget that he should be too late for the coach, my master could scarcely get him to sit down at table. It was in vain the latter assured him there was ample time. At length they started for the coach-office, Smithson carrying the carpet-bag, and Jollywink arrayed and muffled up in true coach-travelling costume, that is to say, in an endless labyrinth of great coats and mufflers; they turned the corner of the last street, when, lo! to Jollywink's horror, the coach was starting. The "whip" had already mounted the box, the guard had called out his last "all right," in fact the wheels had made one whole revolution, when Smithson, making a huge effort to swing the carpetbag above his head, shouted "Hoy, stop, hoy!"

"Hoy, hoy!" echoed the other from the recesses of his worsted muffler, and rearing his umbrella aloft. "Hoy, ho-o-oy,!" cried several little boys on their road to school, who seemed to enjoy the fun amazingly.

"I think I had better run on," said Smithson, and

away he went as fast as the carpet-bag would allow him; he had scarcely succeeded in stopping the coach, and having his friend's luggage stowed safely in the boot, when Jollywink came up at a pace something between a walk, an amble, a canter, and a run.

"Come, sir," cried the coachman, "time's up, if you please; be as quick as you can;" in obedience to which command the person addressed clambered up to the coach-roof with agility most astonishing for one of his size.

- "Good bye," said my master, handing up the umbrella.
- "Bye, bye," said Jollywink; "remember your promise."
- "Never fear," was the reply, and Smithson, waving his hand, turned on his heel.

My master went about his daily duties with his accustomed precision. It was then March. The six following months rolled away in due course, varied by the regular number of public meetings, dinners, &c., at all of which, Smithson acquitted himself with the greatest success. Indeed his name

seemed hourly growing of more importance in W—; and if his popularity increases now as it did during my acquaintance with him, nothing short of a monumental tablet in the parish church can suffice on his decease to extol his merits and to perpetuate his fame. Be this as it may, these identical six months slipped by, and at length came the thirtieth of August, on the morning of which day he conveyed himself, his portmanteau, and his double-barrelled gun up to the coach-office.

It was a glorious morning; there were no clouds to predict rain, no cutting wind, no anything to make a journey unpleasant; the sun shone brightly enough to cheer the heart of the most miserable of mortals, and the weather was sufficiently fine, one would have thought, to induce the most timid to occupy an outside place; but it could not tempt Smithson. He was a nervous little body, and always made it a rule never to ride outside a coach when there was room in: on this occasion ample was offered, for the exterior was fully loaded, while the close, confined, and dusty box with two holes called "the inside," remained

vacant. As luck would have it, to my master's great delight, a companion appeared before the coach started.

This fellow-passenger was a shabby-genteel personage, who, it was evident, rode inside from necessity rather than choice. He had a profusion of grey locks beneath his napless hat, which gave him a most venerable appearance; but there was a fulness in his eye and a paucity of wrinkles on his face altogether at variance with them. He sat himself down directly opposite Smithson. Now, it was a rule of life with the latter, whenever he was thrown in company with a stranger, to discover who and what he was, and whence he came, and all concerning him, with as little exposition of his own affairs as possible. Whether this originated in a laudable desire of gaining information, or was prompted by a petty curiosity unworthy of him, I cannot pretend to determine. It was also one of his maxims that no folly on earth could be greater than for two mortals with tongues in their heads to meet together and not use them. Under these circumstances the reader cannot be surprised at Smithson opening a conversation between himself and his neighbour at the earliest opportunity,

- "Beautiful day," he remarked, popping his head out of the window, and taking a cursory glance from earth to heaven. A remark on the weather was his stock way of beginning a conversation.
- "Very fine," replied the stranger, scarcely raising his eyes from the miserable piece of carpeting at his feet.
- "Hem!" went Smithson, as much as to say "an answer and that's all. I expected it would lead to some observation on his part. However, I'll try again." "Yes," he observed, in continuation, "I think we shall have a pleasant journey. Pray, Sir, how far may I expect the pleasure of your company?"
- "The whole distance to S-, I believe," said the other as before.
- "I am glad of it," replied my master. "I trust we shall soon be better acquainted. Delightful country this," he continued; "are you familiar with these parts?"

The stranger heaved a deep sigh, and simply replied in the affirmative. It was clear his mind was pre-occupied. Smithson began to think it a hopeless case; he made one or two more attempts, which failing, like the others, induced him to give up all idea of drawing his companion into conversation. He shrunk into the corner, and as no other passenger entered, he made up his mind for a tedious journey.

We had whirled along the highway for several hours, when a suppressed groan escaped the lips of my master's unsociable fellow-traveller. He seemed unconscious of the presence of any one. "Ha!" he exclaimed, "it was at this very place—fifteen years ago!"—and, so saying, he burst into tears.

"Did you address me, Sir?" said Smithson, well-knowing he did not, but eagerly embracing the opportunity of entering into a conversation.

"I beg your pardon, I did not, Sir; but this spot brought sad recollections to me, very sad!" was the reply. The stranger seemed to have all at once grown communicative.

"If the relation of your sorrows to a sympathising

ear can ease your distress, I shall be most happy to lend one," replied my master in his blandest tone.

"Alas!" said the other, "'tis a sorrowful tale, and I should be loath to trouble you with a recital of my woes."

"Don't mention it," answered Smithson; "if I can in any way comfort or assist you under them, my good friend, I shall be overjoyed."

"Fifteen years ago," said the stranger, encouraged by his kind manner, "I was travelling on this very road with a young, lovely, and all-confiding wife. It was our wedding-day. We were talking over our prospects of coming happiness, framing endless plans for the future, as sanguine, tender hearts ever do, when sudden as the lightning, our chaise was overthrown, and my wife"—here the stranger paused, tears interrupted his speech—"and my wife," he continued after a few seconds, "had her right arm fractured by the accident."

"What a severe trial for you!" observed Smithson, sympathetically.

"Alas!" replied the stranger, "the worst has yet to be told. She was conveyed to a neighbouring inn, and in the evening died from the effects of the shock, leaving me a spirit-crushed, heart-broken widower:" here the tears coursed rapidly down his cheeks. "I fell into a kind of stupor, which lasted several hours; when it passed, ch! it was then I felt how the hand of Providence had planned the event,—how just had been the retribution for my misdeeds!"

"Blame not yourself too rashly," interrupted my master.

"No blame equals my deserts; but you shall hear all.

"I was clerk in a highly respectable merchant's office, a gentleman who had always treated me with the greatest indulgence and kindness. This best of masters had one daughter, beautiful as ever nature made a woman. Fortune willed that she should form an attachment to me, and I, forgetful of every principle of duty, was mean enough to take advantage of it. We eloped—were married—and you, Sir," said the stranger, "have heard the result. I wrote

to him with the account of his daughter's hapless fate, but he never replied. The expenses of her funeral, and a series of vain endeavours to obtain employment, reduced me to my last shilling. Having no father nor mother living, no home to receive me, I was reluctantly driven to ask succour of my injured father-in law, trusting a history of my sufferings would soften his humane heart towards me. He would not grant me an interview, and only aided me with his purse on condition that I should at once leave the country. I accordingly did so, but the curse of fate seemed to attend my steps; if I obtained money one day it was gone the next, and frequently was I in a condition approaching to starvation. I returned in six years, with the intention of again soliciting the assistance of my former employer, but I found he had been dead several months; and you see me, Sir, before you with scarce a penny in my purse or a thread to my back. I am now journeying in search of a situation, and should I fail to obtain it. Heaven knows what is to become of me!"

My master listened to this melancholy history with the greatest attention throughout, and seemed to take a wonderful interest in the stranger's misfortunes, in proof whereof I may mention that he not only defrayed his expenses on the road, but slipped into his hand other substantial proofs of his sympathy. Smithson really had a benevolent heart and a ready hand to aid a fellow creature in distress. At length the coach arrived at its journey's end, the stranger alighted first, and Smithson hastily followed.

"A fly and pair to 'The Firs' immediately," said he, addressing the book-keeper, and before my master had done superintending the disemboguement of the luggage from the boot where his portmanteau lay, the order was fulfilled. The said portmanteau with the gun and umbrella being duly deposited in the fly, my master stepped into the office to settle for it. He felt in his two trouser-pockets, but his purse was not there,—in his coat-pockets, but it was not there either,—all the pockets were searched in vain "Whatever can I have done with it?" said he.

"Left it in the coach perhaps," suggested the book-keeper.

The coach was inspected, but no purse was found.

"No suspicious person for a fellow-traveller, had you, Sir?" said the book-keeper.

"I had only one companion all the way, a greyheaded person; but he was incapable of".—

"Beg your pardon, Sir," interrupted the flydriver, "but he was no more grey-headed than I be, for I saw hair as black as my hat underneath his false wig; and when he com'd out o' the coach he made off as hard as his legs could carry him."

"Then it appears, Sir," said the book-keeper, "you have been the victim of an impudent sharper."

My master felt a moral conviction of the truth; he had been grossly duped; yes, he, the sharp-sighted Jonas Smithson, who plumed himself on his quick perception of character. His chagrin may be more easily imagined than described. However, the fly was had on credit by the mention of Jollywink's name, and we drove off amid the jeers of the cads and hangers-on of the inn, among whom the tale had got wind.

"Blow'd if the little gent in the specs ain't

chisseled," cried one; but what afforded the most pleasure seemed to be the mimicking of my master's manner by a little ragged stable boy—"Fly and pair," said the urchin, "and put it down to Squire Tick!"

Half an hour's riding brought us in sight of "The Firs."

CHAP. V.

"THE FIRS," AND DOINGS THERE.

It so happened that my master had occasion to use me, as we journeyed on our way, in making some small calculation of expenses on the road, in his usual methodical manner, which gave me an opportunity of viewing one of the most beautiful English landscapes that eye ever rested on. The sun was setting in all his gorgeous summer splendour behind a wood-crowned eminence in the West, imparting to the few clouds that hung around the horizon, a refulgent fringe of gold, and throwing his rays with a soft benign light over the yellow corn-fields and undulating meadows around us. On the face of a river, winding in the vale beneath, some parting beams fell, where they danced and sparkled among the ripples like so many jewels. The trees, which were

just assuming their yellow-tinted foliage, gently waved before the evening breeze, and the little swallows were sporting in merry flocks above us, filling the air with their shrill, playful twitterings; indeed, every animate and inanimate thing seemed to add some additional charm or interest to the delightful scene, and to render itself indispensably necessary to the beauty of the whole. Even Smithson, the town-bred, town-thinking Smithson owned the influence of nature's charms. Gazing with rapture on the view, he uttered aloud, "Well, how delightful! how refreshing! Really, it makes one sigh to live in the country."

It was about seven o'clock when we arrived opposite a neat ivy-mantled cottage, the lodge, as it appeared, to Jollywink's residence. At a shout from the driver, an old sexagenarian of a dame came from its rustic porch, and threw open the white gate (over whose evolutions and revolutions it was her especial duty to preside), eyeing my master, meanwhile, with a look of great curiosity and inquisitiveness. Our chaise was thus admitted to a fine old

avenue of fir trees, very venerable productions of the earth, from which, doubtless, the ancestral home of the Jollywinks had taken its name. Emerging from their shade we came suddenly in sight of the house itself, and a most inviting rural residence it proved to be, - Jollywink himself, evidenced in bricks and mortar. So neat was it, so snug looking, so old fashioned, with its quirks and corners, its gable-ended roofs and dormers. A closer inspection shewed us the proprietor in person, who was standing under its rustic verandah, which revelled in evergreens and roses and blossoming creepers. Yes, there he stood, shading the light with his one hand to have a better view of the arrival, and checking the fond gambolling of a handsome old pointer dog with the other. It was evident he recognized Smithson, for he was off within doors in a twinkling, the consequences of which proceeding on his part were the projection of two female heads from the open parlour windows, and his own prompt re-appearance at the front door step, on a level with which we at length drew up.

But how can I describe the meeting between the

friends; such a shaking of hands from Jollywink; such a hearty welcome from Mrs. J., and such a polite bow from a young lady, who was introduced by Jollywink as "my niece, Miss Elizabeth"—somebody, for I did not catch the surname; at all events, it is not of the slightest moment, since the family always styled her "Lizzy," and so shall I. Then the luggage was brought in, and the fly driver sent round to make friends with the cook; then Smithson was relieved of his travelling garments by several pairs of officious hands, and finally was escorted into the parlor, Mrs. Jollywink leading, himself next, Jollywink third file, Miss Lizzy fourth, and the old pointer bringing up the rear.

"So you really are come?" said Jollywink, addressing Smithson when they were seated.

"Bodily and perceptibly," replied Smithson, smiling, "and do you know," continued he, "I feel quite at home here already." And how could he feel otherwise? all were so delighted, so happy to see him.

Oh, there is something heart-soothing in those three little words, "quite at home." They grant to home

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its proper dignity and estimation. Beginning on the principle "there is no place like home," they carry out the maxim still further, and would give us to understand that the nearer what an individual meets with abroad, or under a strange roof, resembles that which surrounds him at his own domestic hearth, the happier, the more comfortable is he. But they are no words for the lips of the pleasure seeker to pronounce, the mortal who is never happy except when from home, who regards it as a dull, senseless scene of common place, inexcitable events. No, they must come from a tongue that utters the sentiments of a heart full of calm content and tranquil homelove.

Now commenced an amicable war of words between Jollywink and his lady with regard to the refreshments of which their visitor should partake; the former spoke loudly in the cause of beef-steaks and brandy-and-water,—"one always wants something solid and strengthening after a journey, or one is never fit for anything the next day," said he; but Mrs. Jollywink recommended tea and its concomi-

"Tea," she remarked, "was so refreshing, such a restorative to weariness." At length, after vainly and repeatedly declaring he wanted nothing, (which is a dish served up with very little trouble), Smithson declared in favour of the tea, with a cold joint to cut at therewith, dispensing altogether with the brandy-and-water, to Jollywink's great discomfort. The table was furnished accordingly, and while Smithson was thus satisfying the cravings of nature, a message came to him "to please remember the driver." There was no help for it; he was compelled to borrow a few shillings of his friend, to exercise his memory in that particular way which the man wished; and then he proceeded to explain how he had been defrauded by his fellow-traveller of the silvery locks, much to the amusement of his listeners.

"Really, it is very provoking," said Mrs. Jollywink, "to be cheated in this way, but is there no chance of punishing the thief?"

"I fancy there would be some difficulty in finding him; first catch your hare, you know, Aunt," said the young lady laughing. "Wouldn't I horsewhip the rascal," cried Jollywink, "if ever I caught him!" and I do think, from his energetic manner, if a horsewhip had been near, the old gentleman would have shewn us practically how he would have carried out the sentiment.

"Bygones must be bygones," replied Smithson;
"I have lost my money, and been imposed upon in a manner I never was before, or never thought I should be; as it is not my habit to fret, I shall not in the present instance."

"All mighty philosophical," said Jollywink, "but it is not by any means pleasant to be 'done' like this."

"Certainly not," was the answer. "Is this to be one of our companions on Monday?" continued Smithson, suddenly changing the subject, and drawing attention to the old pointer, who lay on the hearth on the best possible terms with a fine grey cat.

"O! no, no," said Jollywink; "I have a brace of his descendants, though, as capital dogs as ever were shot over. Poor old Merlin; he has grown too aged and stiff-jointed for a day's sport, but he and I have trudged many a mile together in our time, have we not, old fellow?" And the dog, seemingly aware that he was the subject of conversation, rose up from his recumbent posture, and lovingly laid his jowl on his master's knee. "Old friends," said Jollywink feelingly, "old friends, Joney, must not be forsaken, and we keep him now more for the good he has been than for the good he is."

"Pray do not say 'we,'" exclaimed his wife, who appeared to think that the room which the dog occupied on the hearth rug, would be far more desirable than his company.

The conversation now turned on the sport likely to be had on the "first." Jollywink prognosticated capital. "Plenty of birds," said he; "I know of two coveys, within two hundred yards of this room, and my men tell me the whole neighbourhood abounds with them; and if the partridges are not wild and strong on the wing, rely upon it, we shall bring home good proof of a fair day's work."

"Famous!" said Smithson, rubbing his hands with glee.

But truly, gentle friends, I could not see anything "famous" in the intelligence. What! 'Famous', thought I, to be firing away at poor defenceless little birds, all day long, and that for mere sport, and not from the necessity of the thing. It is a "famous" piece of cruelty, nothing more nor less; but human beings are strange creatures, very strange; Jollywink, for instance, who had evinced the kind-liest feelings towards his old pointer, possessed not an ounce of pity for the harmless partridges.

Cards were subsequently introduced; partners were chosen, and Miss Lizzy and my master, after a long period of "shuffle and cut, deal and play" had the satisfaction of being beaten out of sundry points at sixpenny whist by the husband and wife. Smithson was always esteemed at his card club in W. quite a Don at the game, but whether it was the journey, or the unremitted conversation, or the fact of his having an interesting young lady for a partner, that caused him to misdeal, to revoke, and be guilty of other peccadilloes with the cards this

identical evening, I cannot positively state; nevertheless, I am inclined to think the latter was the reason, for as I peered out from the corner of his waistcoat pocket, I certainly observed his eyes more frequently fixed on his partner than on the pasteboards before him. Hence it may be presumed, that there was somewhat to attract the gaze in the person of the young lady, and whoever hazards the presumption, let me tell him, or her, it is well founded. Lizzy was not absolutely handsome, perhaps her features would have been objected to by a scrupulous physiognomist, yet, in good truth, she was very fair to look upon. Nature had given her a pretty little face, a pretty little figure, a pretty little hand, and a pair of bright black eyes, full of expression and animation, which as they looked downwards to the card-table, beneath their long silken lashes, the soft lamp light shewing off to advantage her beautifully arched eyebrows, gave her altogether a most inviting and loveable appearance. It was evident to me her charms had made some impression on Smithson's half-a-century-old heart.

The cards having done their duty, supper made

its appearance, with some of the temperance man's enemies afterwards. Jollywink then called on his niece for a song, with which request she complied by seating herself at the piano and singing a charming ballad in a charming, unaffected manner.

"Now Smithson will favour us," said Jollywink, "he can sing some of his own verses, Lizzy."

"Oh, do oblige us," observed Mrs. J., and the young lady's persuasives being added to the rest, Smithson sung the following verses from his own poetical mill, unquestionably suggested by the feelings his pretty little card partner had awakened.

BALLAD.

Oh, bright are the moonbeams that silently play,
On the dark rolling wave and the high dashing spray;
Oh, bright is the lustre the diamond doth shew,
Bright, bright are the dew-drops, and bright is the snow;
Then bright are the bubbles which mantle the bowl,
And bright are the joys old wine gives to the soul,
But brighter, far brighter than either to me
A glance of affection from thine eyes would be.
Oh, dear is old England, the land of my birth,
'Bove all other nations and countries on earth,
Where'er through the wide world my footsteps may roam
Thrice dear is my own and my forefathers' home;

Then dear are mementos of long parted friends,
And dear are the thoughts which their presence oft lends,
But dearer, far dearer than either would be
Fond whisperings of love, coming gently from thee.

"Why, Joney," said Jollywink, "you are quite romantic, a production of your younger days, I should say?"

Smithson made no reply, except a slight bow, in return for the thanks of his lady listeners. I myself thought I had never seen him look so foolish. He appeared like one who had taken a step which he would gladly have withdrawn. However, his vapours soon vanished, and when the signal for retiring was given, he was in the best possible spirits, shaking all his friends heartily by the hand, the young lady's, perchance, a little more expressively than a one evening's acquaintance would justify, he betook himself to his bed-room, doubtlessly to dream of pretty faces, with eyes and other features bearing a strong resemblance to Lizzy's.

CHAP. VI.

DOINGS AT "THE FIRS," CONTINUED.

"ARE you a regular church-goer?" observed Jollywink to his friend, as they sat alone after breakfast, the next morning, both the ladies having left the room to prepare for church.

"I always endeavor to be," replied Smithson; but what a strange question, Jollywink. Are you not, then, one yourself?"

"Joney," said he emphatically, "for the last twenty years I have never once missed attendance at Sunday morning's service. Inclination always has led, and, Heaven be thanked, illness never has prevented me. But my reason for asking was simply this: it has now-a-days become the fashion, from a multitude of ill-founded reasons, for people to absent themselves from church attendance. Some excuse themselves because their minister does not practise

what he teaches from the pulpit; many, because they are on bad terms with the clergyman, and others, because the doctrines delivered do not exactly accord with their own sentiments. So away they go, flocking to some chapel or lecture room where their favourite, or the popular, preacher holds forth."

"A kind of ecclesiastical lion," interrupted my master; "just as if God's holy temples were made to preach and not to pray in."

"Very true. When persons," continued Jollywink, "stay away from their proper place of worship for either of the above reasons, it is a pretty good proof that they never attended there in that true Christian spirit which should lead them to join in supplication and prayer one for the other, to Him who is their common Father. What does it concern a man who presides in the reading-desk, provided the service is read with due solemnity and decency?"

"Besides," said Smithson, "look at the force of example, and what an evil one the habit sets."

"Right, again, my friend. Now there is my

neighbour, T——, of the next village; he is the largest proprietor, and consequently the greatest man, in the parish. Being all awry with his Rector, on the tithe question, he thinks fit to forego church attendance, and to forbid the same in any of his family, and the upshot is that the village church throws open its doors well nigh in vain every Sabbath, for its pews are almost tenantless, scarcely a human being to each."

"Of course," said my master, "it is always the case; whenever the poorer inhabitants find their richer neighbours, and their superiors in education negligent in this particular, they immediately begin to think there is no such imperative duty for attendance at Sunday service on their parts, and all the exhortations of their pastors are of no avail."

The other concurred, observing that example went further than precept. Their conversation was here put a stop to by the entrance of Mrs. Jollywink and her niece in their walking habiliments, ready for the start. "Half-past ten," said Jollywink, referring to his watch, "as we have a mile-and-a-half walk before

us, we had better set out," which they accordingly did.

Their way lay through a portion of the beautiful landscape my master and I had so much admired from the chaise, the previous evening, and, certainly, it lost nothing by closer acquaintance. The church itself stood on an eminence, forming a conspicuous object in our view, and affording a resting-place to the eye after gazing on the luxuriant verdure all around. It was, however, a queer piece of architecture: its tower was of wood, weather-worn, and green with age. The main body of the building was of older date, as the crumbling, tottering walls testified, while the chancel had been lately renovated with the aid of plaster and whitewash, which forcibly reminded me of an old lady rougeing her shrivelled cheeks to make herself look young, and hide the ravages of the "old clocksetter," to use one of my master's favourite expressions. thought I, (I was always of a reflecting moralizing turn,) "better let Time have his way, than employ such feeble means to oppose his inroads; particu-

larly when they aim at appearances and not at permanent benefit, his victory is only the more triumphant in the end-his laugh only the more derisive." The burial-ground, which surrounded the antiquated structure, was in very comely order. There were the usual number of gravestones, from the humble head and foot to the railed-in monument: some brilliant with fresh white paint, others mosscovered, and far out of the perpendicular, on which the lapse of years had made deeper incisions than the chisel, but all telling the same sad tale to the human gazer, how, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, must some day settle accounts with nature. As if to draw one away from such reflections, a host of rosy-faced children, awaiting the time for the commencement of service, were gambolling among the tombs, plucking daisies from the grassy mounds, and pointing out to each other's mirthlit eyes the fantastical cherub heads on the tombstones, unconscious, they, of what the figures were intended to represent, and perchance ignorant that under such hillocks their own narrow coffins would, sooner or later, lie.

"There," said Jollywink, calling Smithson's attention from a quaint monumental inscription, which he was about employing me to copy, and directing it towards a fat elderly lady waddling in silk and satin along an opposite path to the church door, with a pompous red-faced footman behind, carrying her bible and prayer-book. "There," repeated he, "is one of your town innovations, tending as much to destroy the beautiful simplicity of rural Sabbath-worship as anything I know;—as if the lump of pride couldn't carry her own bible!" This was all said in an under tone.

"Who is she?" inquired my master.

At this moment the bell ceased tolling, and every one hastened to the interior, which prevented Jollywink's giving an immediate reply. However, he did so on their return, when Smithson repeated the inquiry. "Her name is Richman," said he, "and she is the wife of a retired merchant, of plebeian origin, but his hoard of wealth has enabled him, apparently, to place himself among our county aristocracy. He has purchased a fine mansion and

estate of several hundred acres in the neighbourhood, of a ruined Baronet, now residing abroad, and since he is thus the inhabitant of 'the great house,' as the rustics style it, of course we term him 'the Squire.'"

"What? and do not you hold that dignity, I always fancied you did?" observed my master.

"No. Poz."

"He does not," continued Mrs. Jollywink, smiling; but he is a good deal more popular among his parishioners than Mr. Richman. To tell the truth, our 'Squire' is looked upon as a kind of interloper, and his haughty purse-proud ways do not a little increase the dislike which first impressions created."

Any one would have vouched for the truth of the lady's statement, if they had seen, as I saw, the widely different manner in which the fat Mrs. Richman and the Jollywinks comported on coming out of church. While the former turned neither to the right nor the left, looking unutterable things at each unfortunate plough-boy whose clean smock-frock brushed too near her own flaunting habiliments, and

walking as though the gravel path was made expressly for her own private accommodation; the others had a kind word for all their humbler acquaintances, as they lingered about the venerable church porch, they had many a recognising nod to bestow in reply to the upraised hats of the men, or respectful courtesies of the women peasantry.

"And, pray, Mr. Smithson, how did you like the sermon?" asked the young lady.

"You will excuse me," he replied, "but I certainly have heard many better. Indeed, your minister is not very impressive in any part of the service."

"Poor Mr. Text is a good worthy creature in the parish, but he is a terribly hum-drum clergyman. Really, it almost puts one asleep, sometimes, to hear him; and if it were not for the distance, I think I should be tempted to go"—

"Lizzy, dear," interrupted her uncle, "how often have you heard me speak against the absurd practice of running after a preacher; rest contented at your own parish church, and thank Heaven that you have opportunities granted you of worshipping your Maken there."

Just then the peculiar noise of partridges on the wing attracted their attention; in an instant, both parson and sermon were forgotten.

"What a capital shot," cried Smithson, levelling his forefinger, as if it were a gun, at the birds, as they flew over the meadow, about twenty yards from where he stood.

"Pretty little things," said Mrs. Jollywink, "they have not long to live, I fear."

"That they've not, if our guns earry as they ought, eh, Smithson?" observed her husband. The conversation here turned on the morrow's proceedings, and so they reached home.

After tea another walk was proposed by Jollywink, and resolved upon unanimously—the evening being delightfully serene and warm for that late period of summer. My master, who had escorted his hostess to church in the morning, thought it was nothing beyond common politeness to offer his arm to Miss. Lizzy in this excursion. It was at once accepted; and actually I felt, more than once, the pressure of hers through the waistcoat pocket where I lay, as

they strolled along. There may, or may not, be necessity for a gentleman to squeeze a lady's arm, when linked in his own; but from subsequent experience, I am led to believe there is not. it might have been, in the present instance, an accident, but still I don't think it was; recollect I only think, and would not dare speak positively on so important a matter, for—the best polishing I ever underwent. They had an extremely pleasant ramble through shady groves, over fragrant meads, and beneath bowering hedgerows; then there were a multitude of perplexing stiles to ascend, at all of which Smithson was particularly attentive to his pretty companion; then the straggling briers would provokingly interweave themselves in the folds of her dress, and this led to a good deal of tittering on her part, and awkward (perhaps, here again I dare not speak positively, purposely awkward) efforts on my master's part to disentangle them. However, they arrived at "the Firs" without bodily damage, except to Smithson's heart, in time for an early supper, which having partaken of, Jollywink gave ample

directions to the boy who was to accompany them on the morrow, respecting the dogs and the guns, and the time they were to start, with various other instructions, and then the family retired.

At day-dawn the next morning, Jollywink and Smithson were abroad, fully accoutred for the sport, having previously fortified themselves with a substantial breakfast. The dogs seemed delighted their duties for the season had commenced: they frisked about the lawn, snuffing up the fresh dew, and then returning to their master with a joyful bark, as much as to say, "Come, let us begin." At a sign from the boy, they were quite orderly, and went about their work in a manner which elicited the approbation of both the sportsmen.

"Depend upon it, we shall quickly find some birds," observed Jollywink.

He was correct. A few moments afterwards the dogs pointed beautifully. "Smithson," said he, "let me see how you can handle the trigger; you shall have the first pop at them." My master crept

stealthily forward, the dogs advanced, and up flew a large covey. "Bang, bang," went the two barrels of his gun. One bird fell and another had been slightly wounded.

"I see you have not lost the knack, Joney," cried his friend; "but you ought to have killed a brace."

"Bring down more for a trifle to-day than you do," replied my master.

"Done, for a dozen of sherry."

"It's a wager;" and after he had reloaded, he entered it with me on his tablets, commencing his own list with the figure of "1" on account of the bird just shot.

They scrambled over hedge and ditch, meeting with what they were pleased to style, "capital sport" in their progress, until about eleven o'clock, when they returned homewards to regale themselves with luncheon, which they had given especial directions should be ready for them by that hour. On comparing notes they discovered that Jollywink headed the score by one solitary partridge.

"Are you agreeable to draw the bet?" he laughingly exclaimed.

"Not I," said Smithson, "I shall be victorious yet, mark me."

And so he was, for from the time that they sallied forth again until their return to dinner when the sport was given up for that day, he succeeded in shooting three more partridges than Jollywink, which consequently gave him an advantage of exactly a brace.

The two following days offered no variety in their events. Shooting occupied the greater part, cards and music filling up the evenings. On the latter day, a fellow-sportsman joined the dinner party, and passed the evening, which occasioned the absence of Miss Lizzy from the whist-table; a result, I fancy, Smithson did not much relish, since he never appeared happier than when conversing with her, or when she was near for his eyes to feast upon. It was clear as noon-day to me that he was momentarily growing more deeply in love. Sometimes, when alone, he would betray himself by expressing

his thoughts aloud, saying something about "a dear" and "a darling duck," with other terms of fondness which I could not but apply to Lizzy. Once I really overheard him confess in more direct terms. I was lying on his dressing-table, and he was operating with the razor on his chin-" Bless her," said he, coming to a pause in his shave; "what a nice little wife she would make." "She," of course, referred to Lizzy. Do you doubt it, reader, after the confessions I have already made touching my bachelor proprietor? I could not help smiling to myself at the idea of a man like him, who had lived upwards of fifty years in this bustling world, entertaining such serious notions of uniting himself with his friend's niece, who was scarcely out of her teens, particularly as he had so long survived the period when the glowing imagination of the youthful heart leads its owner uncontrollably towards some individual in the opposite sex, selected to be worshipped openly or in secret, the loadstar of its very existence; that period when the matrimonial noose is clutched at with avidity as if it were a gazland of never-fading roses, or spurned with horror as a galling fetter too troublesome to be worn.

Here I may mention that Smithson once had an exceedingly narrow escape from tying the Hymeneal knot. It was with the daughter of a wealthy grocer, who lived next door to the shop at which Smithson had been apprenticed in W---. His own lips are my authority. From the hints thus gathered it appeared that from casual acquaintanceship, which proximity of abode could not fail to bring about, time had enabled him to establish himself (as he thought) permanently in her affections. They were accustomed to hold clandestine interviews, convey little billets to each other some half-dozen times a day, and indeed matters had gone so far that it was arranged between them, when my future master's time of servitude had expired, that she should become Mrs. Jonas Smithson, her father's consent being first had and obtained. The grocer meanwhile took it into his head to have a partner, a person who should take the weight of active business from his own. shoulders while he himself continued to reap the

greater portion of the profits. So a new partner made his appearance. "The world," Smithson would say, when relating the circumstances, "called him a fine, handsome young man; for my part, I never could see anything to admire in him."-Poor mortal, the world and he saw the same object with very different eyes.—From the time of his entering the business, the affections of the faithless damsel were gradually withdrawn from Smithson, the little notes passed less frequently, the appointments for stolen interviews were neglected, and, alas, for the frailty of woman! she first conferred her heart to the keeping of the new partner, and afterwards sealed the gift with her hand, with her parent's entire approbation, and to her former lover's enduring sorrow. Yet subsequently he thanked his propitious fate, for, to make use of his own expression, she turned out "a complete vixen of a wife." Perhaps this circumstance of having been so jilted in his youth had eradicated all lover-like sentiments from his bosom, and caused him to remain a bachelor. If any credit was due for replanting them, it must be given to Lizzy, since the light of her eyes had fairly re-illumined the darkness of his heart's recesses, and dissipated the chill which had reigned there for so many years.

The next day was passed rather differently to the preceding ones. Jollywink was called from home on particular business; Smithson accordingly occupied the morning in answering the letters which the everthoughtful Mrs. Sims, in obedience to his commands, had daily forwarded him. Having completed his task, he strolled forth, gun in hand, to pass an hour or so away, with less of sportsman-like eagerness than I had as yet seen. The truth was, as the love of woman increased in his breast, the love of sport grew less; and if Lizzy had been at home, he would have granted the poor partridges some rest, at all events, for that day. Unfortunately she had gone out with her aunt to pay some morning calls in the neighbouring village, while he was engaged at his desk. I say unfortunately, because of the result of his expedition.

He was walking by the side of a small plantation,

when the pointer with him indicated by his movements that some birds were near. He had scarcely time to raise his gun in readiness ere the birds rose; he fired, and one fell in the wood. Over the fence went the dog and my master after him in search of it. He had given up the seeking and was whistling his dog to return, when his eye caught sight of a gentleman riding furiously towards him on a grey pony. He wore a sportsman's habit, and had his gun with him.

"Stop, hold! hold, stop!" cried he from a distance. So my master stopped. "Your name, if you please?" said the stranger, in an angry authoritative tone, as he came up.

"And pray, Sir, what business is that of yours?" replied Smithson, a little nettled by his manner.

"Every business, Sir, let me tell you."

My master was not ashamed of his name, therefore he gave it. "Smithson," said he, "Jonas Smithson; and now perhaps you will condescend to let me know your reason for asking, or favour me with your own in return." "It is not of the slightest consequence, Mr. Smithson," replied the other, sneeringly. "You are on a visit at the Firs; you shall hear from me again, Sir;" and he was making off, but just at the moment the pointer dog came in sight with the partridge in his mouth. Suddenly the stranger checked his pony, deliberately levelled his gun at the dog, pulled the trigger, and the poor animal fell dead at Smithson's feet.

"What business has the cur here?" exclaimed the stranger. My master's remonstrances were useless; he set spurs to his pony, and was quickly lost in the coppice.

"However shall I explain this matter to my friend? It was his favorite pointer," said my master, meditating aloud. "What could the rascal's name be?"

Smithson made the best of his way home, where he found Jollywink had already arrived. He related the first portion of the adventure, and was about to describe the personal appearance of the stranger, when his friend interrupted him. "Had the individual a long thin visage, with a peaked nose?" said he, smiling.

Smithson gave an affirmative nod.

"Just as I expected," continued Jollywink. "It's my neighbour, Richman, for a crown," and he burst into a hearty laugh, in which Smithson felt himself a great deal too awkwardly situated to join. "Ha! ha! you will hear from him, Joney, with a vengeance, and that before you are many hours older. There's a summons out against you by this time, poz!"

"A summons!" cried my master in alarm; "for what?"

"For trespass, as surely as you are standing there. You were trespassing in the Squire's preserve," and the old man laughed on as heartily as before. Smithson thought of the summons and began to feel nervous.

"Do you think if I were to send an apologising note at once, it would appease Mr. Richman's wrath?"

"You might as well apologise to a post that you

had happened to run against," said Jollywink, scarcely able to restrain his risible faculties. "He would not pay the least attention to it."

Poor Smithson's fears waxed greater.

"The real state of the case is this," Jollywink went on to say, "my property and the Squire's lie intermixed. Soon after he purchased his estate, he commenced a disagreeable lawsuit with me, respecting the boundary of a particular field. Luckily I had the best of it, and from that time to this he has thought fit to be at daggers drawn. He devises every method he can to plague me, but I care not a fice for him. I only laugh at his unneighbourly proceedings."

But Jollywink, when he heard of the slaughter of his favorite dog, was compelled to do otherwise; his good humour vanished, and he flew into a violent rage, as well he might. "The unfeeling brute," said he. "If his wife's pet Italian greyhound were to trespass on my land, what would he think of my remorselessly shooting it? Well, poz! with all his ill-will I did not think he would carry it thus far."

Mr. Richman was as good as his word; my master did hear from him again. About an hour from the time of his return he received an unpleasant communication from that personage, commencing as usual, "You are hereby required in her Majesty's name," &c. &c.

Jollywink's prognostications had proved right; it was a summons whereby "Jonas Smithson, Gent.," received a peremptory command to appear before the Queen's Justices assigned, &c., on the following day, to answer a charge of trespass preferred against him by Ezekiel Richman, Esquire. The receipt of the summons put Smithson in a great fidget; naturally nervous, he was now doubly so. His friend observed his condition, and, forgetful of his own grievance, endeavoured to cheer him. "Come, come, Joney," said the easy-tempered man, "why do you let such a trifle as this trouble you? Some nominal fine will be all the punishment; so we know the worst of that."

Smithson made some remark on the unpleasant notoriety attending it.

"Nonsense, my good fellow, you have no occasion to fret on that score. Besides," continued Jollywink, "we have a few friends coming to dine with us to-day, and it will not do for either of us to be in the dumps." The worthy here forced a laugh, which one who had not heard a genuine specimen would never have believed was a counterfeit. They now parted to prepare for the reception of their visitors, who assembled about five o'clock, to the number of seven gentlemen.

At the dinner-table, Smithson made an effort to sit next to his charming Lizzy, but it was a failure. A nod from Jollywink compelled him to take the seat of honour by his hostess. The young lady was located at the farthest corner from himself; thus while he was plagued with the prosy outpourings of a superannuated lieutenant near him, he had the mortification to see Lizzy highly entertained by the witticisms and droll remarks of a facetious young gentleman, her right-hand neighbour. How cross my master looked at the facetious young gentleman, and how delighted was he when the two ladies with-

drew. Since he had not the pleasure of her company he was angry another should have it; and of course when that other was deprived of it, felt happy—a species of selfishness peculiar to hearts in the predicament of my master's.

Smithson was still much out of spirits, with respect to his adventure of the morning. He was rallied by his friend; but it was not till the decanters had made several circuits that they recovered their accustomed tone. Healths were then proposed, and songs given with great zest. One person chanted a great deal about the army and the navy and the navy and the army, and how "Britons never would be slaves." The witty individual sang a comic ditty concerning the adventures of some Cockney sportsmen, who met with many more serious mishaps than Smithson had. When it was his turn he favoured them with the following

BACCHANALIAN SONG.

"Ye merry folks all, come list to me,
A jovial song I'll sing!
The demon of care shall scouted be,
And sorrow away we'll fling,
We'll fling,
And sorrow away we'll fling!

"A bumper we'll quaff to our Island Queen, Who reigns o'er a people free; May the rose, and thistle, and shamrock green, For ever united be,

Yes, yes!

For ever united be!

"And now we will drink to our host, my boys!

Let the red wine touch the brim;

Long, long may we live to know the joys

Of having a friend like him,

Like him,

Of having a friend like him!

"And now to the health of our noble selves, For merry fellows are we! And the deeper each lip the goblet delves, The merrier we shall be,

Ha, ha!

The merrier we shall be!"

They certainly did grow merrier, if noisy con versation and unmeaning laughter constituted merriment. The party broke up at eleven, when those that could stand on their legs led those that could not from the table. As for my master, he was in no condition to meet his lady friends, so posted direct to his bed-room with the assistance of Jollywink, leaving me under the table to take up my night's quarters in a dinner napkin.

CHAP. VII.

INTERESTING.

When a person is in such an unfortunate predicament as to be unable to take proper care of himself, it can be no matter for wonderment that he fails in the care of the things which to him pertain. This being my master's case, I did not impute much blame to him for the thoughtless manner in which he left me under his friend's hospitable board; neither did I fret much with the fear of not being restored to him when the morning arrived; it was not likely I should fall into dishonest hands. It gave me some little alarm when I reflected that I might be wrapped up unseen in the table napkin, and unwittingly consigned by Mary the housemaid to the buck-basket, and a serious bruise I had received against the leg of

the table as I fell, also occasioned grief; nevertheless, I made myself as comfortable as I could under the circumstances; particularly, since I had a companion in misfortune—an albata-metal cigar-holder,—rather low society for a handsome silver pencil-case, like myself; but, as I have often heard Smithson remark, "Misery makes us acquainted with strange bedfellows." He lay on the opposite side of the napkin, and I took very good care to keep him at his distance.

"And pray whose property may you be?" said I, when I had recovered my serenity, which I must confess was a little ruffled by the novelty of my situation.

"I belong to the Lieutenant, who sat next to the gentleman named Smithson," said the cigar-holder, seemingly much encouraged by my tone of condescension.

- "It is a nasty habit that of smoking," I observed; "how long have you been in his employ?"
- "Several years," he replied; "but, excuse me, Mr. Pencil-case, smoking is not a nasty habit. I

consider it a great inspirer of social comfort, conducive to mental repose, and a solace to an old, single gentleman like the Lieutenant."

"What! to stupify the brains, benumb all the faculties, parch the mouth, and shrivel up the countenance, do you call these praiseworthy practices?" said I, somewhat startled at the familiar way in which he addressed a superior.

"At all events, it is not so bad as taking snuff, rejoined the upstart; the idea of stuffing the nostrils with a dirty mixture like that. And how that Smithson did empty his box—really, I was disgusted!"

"Hold your tongue, Sir," cried I; "Mr. Smithson, you must know, is my master, and you shall not insult him to my face. Such language and sentiments only prove your vulgar origin."

The cigar-holder made some further observation, but I maintained a dignified silence, treating him with the contempt which his impudent behaviour deserved. I only was to blame for having lowered myself so far as ever to have addressed him.

The morning came, the morning of an important day to Smithson, and I was safely returned to my abode in his waistcoat pocket. What a leer of parting defiance I gave the cigar-holder. What a feeling of exultation was mine at being removed from such company. If I had remained much longer with him, really I think I should have imbibed the taint of his impurity. Alas, for me, it has been my fate to fall among meaner associates than he. How often since then have I reflected that on this very morning I was but imitating the conduct of the purseproud Mrs. Richman, when she made her exit from the village church, conduct that the upright Jollywink had designated "uncalled for and unjust." Experience has told me that no pride is so false as pride of birth; no disdain so ill-founded as disdain towards an inferior.

After breakfast, Jollywink and Smithson started to town, to appear in court in reply to the summons served on the latter the previous day. The sitting magistrate, who looked as though all the lore of all the legal heads in England was collected and com-

pressed into his own cranium, had several cases to decide before this identical one could be heard. At length its turn came; but I will not trouble the reader with full particulars how Mr. Richman indulged in a great deal of violent personal abuse of his neighbour, Jollywink; how Jollywink listened to it with all imaginable coolness, and how Smithson, in vindicating himself, did not forget to make mention of the wanton slaughter of his friend's favorite pointer. It is enough to say, that Smithson was adjudged to pay an insignificant fine for his unpremeditated trespass, with the costs, and it having been proved that Richman had no notice-boards in the preserve, to the effect that all dogs found there would be shot, he was directed by the magistrate to compensate for the loss of the animal. He left the court in a fume of passion. "He never heard such law; he never knew such justice; and," said he, addressing Jollywink, "if you, Sir, attempt to enforce this decision, (here he gave a furious glance at the magistrate) I shall at once appeal against it."

"Do you think he will carry his threat of appeal-

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ing into execution?" said my master to Jollywink, as they drove home.

"Not he: his temper must have its fling, and when it passes, perhaps he will make me some amends by way of apology. Of course, I shall never ask him for a farthing of compensation. All I wished was to make his unjustifiable behaviour generally known, and in this I think I have succeeded, for a pretty public exhibition he has made of himself."

Smithson never heard anything more of Mr. Richman or his summons during his stay at "the Firs."

The evening of that day brought an event of much more consequence to my master's peace of mind than this trumpery affair of the summons; this was nothing less than the arrival of——but hold! I will not forestal my narrative.

Jollywink, his lady, and Smithson were sitting, after tea, with no other employment than watching the moon as she pursued her cloudless course through the sky, surrounded by a galaxy of brilliant stars.

"What a delightful night," cried my master; "truly I feel a strong inclination to take a stroll and enjoy the beauties of the landscape by moonlight. What say you, Jollywink, to accompanying me?"

"Walking out at this late hour," replied his friend, "may be all very well for youthful poetical enthusiasts, like yourself; but I fancy an attack of rheumatics, brought on by yonder fog rising over the lawn, will more than counterbalance the pleasure of half an hour's star-gazing. You see, Joney, I am very matter of fact in my ideas."

My master laughed at being styled a "poetical enthusiast," and was not to be daunted by the prospect of rheumatics, or any other of the ills to which fleah is heir, but resolutely donned his hat, observing that "he would take a few turns on the lawn by himself." It was, indeed, a delightful night; not raw, chilly, and misery-breeding, like a November night, but serene and refreshing, like an early September one should be. There was a mist floating up the valley from the river, as Jollywink had remarked;

but what of that? It only made the landscape more suitable to the hour, and seemed like an expansive unruffled lake, bounded by the hills in the distance. It was a night to inspire the most unreflective with thought, the most vitiated with pure and holy feeling, at least so said Smithson; for although my experiences in some measure enable me to pass opinions on persons and things, of course, I cannot be supposed to know how far external circumstances influence that strange receptacle of vice and virtue—the human heart.

My master was just emerging from a by-path into the carriage-drive beneath the avenue of old firs, through whose over-arching branches the moonbeams had a hard struggle to reach the earth, when he came suddenly on Lizzy. She slightly started back—

"Bless me, how you made my heart leap, Mr. Smithson," said she, when she recognized the cause of her momentary fright.

No doubt Smithson would have been too happy to have caused her heart to leap with a certain emotion other than that of fear. Of course, he did not say as much, but merely made an apology for having unintentionally intruded on her solitary pathway. "Perhaps," continued he, "you would be better able to meet other dangers of the hour if you accepted my arm." She seemed unwilling at first, but Smithson's persuasion triumphed.

- "Cogitating by moonlight, eh!" he observed.
- "Oh, no, no," she laughingly exclaimed; "I am not romantic enough for that; still, I dearly love a ramble by moonlight."
- "With a particular friend for a companion, I dare say you find it more agreeable than when alone, like most young ladies."
- "Ah! you quiz," replied the sprightly Lizzy.

 "But suppose I have no particular friend of the kind you would imply."

Smithson looked inquiringly in her face, as if to learn whether, if such was the case, there was any chance of establishing himself in that enviable position, and then there was a pause.

"What numberless charming verses have been

inscribed to yonder beautiful Queen of the Heavens,'.
he at length remarked.

"And a great deal of trash, too, I fear," replied his companion.

"I perfectly agree with you," said Smithson, "still, I do not envy any man his mind that cannot entertain some higher feelings than the common run, when contemplating such a scene as this. It raises a man, as it were, above the selfish ideas he forms in the hurry and bustle of life, and fills him with generous kindly sentiments of love and pity towards his fellows, which, in the world's contagious climate, are too apt to find no place in the breast."

Lizzy, who appeared to me rather pre-occupied, murmured a faint "yes." She raised her pretty face towards the sky, and as the soft moonbeams fell on it, I thought I had never seen her look so interesting, nor have I the least hesitation in adding that my master was of the same opinion, and, between the reader and myself, at this juncture, he gave the arm within his a gentle pressure—very gentle indeed, still quite strong enough to make me sensible that it

was a nice round plump little arm,—an arm that any man would have been proud to encircle within his own. I also fancied I heard a suppressed giggle from its owner, it might have been only fancy.

"I do not now how it is," resumed Smithson, but when alone at such a moment as this, I have a sensation of double loneliness; I am, as it were, removed bodily and mentally from the rest of the world."

"There I cannot coincide with you," interrupted Lizzy, who started as from a reverie. "To me, the moon is a kind of companion; she tells me the eyes of those I love, far, far away, are directed towards her, like my own; and when I reflect, in the night-time, that she is watching over and shining on their homes as she is on mine, she draws me more closely to them, if not substantially, at least in spirit." Here the echo of a sigh caught my ear; but it was a sigh more connected with her own thoughts than with my master. He, dull fellow that he was, must have imagined it related to himself, or he would not have continued as he did,

"Oh, that there were lips to utter fond expressions

like these, applicable to myself: but alas!" said he, dropping his voice to a half whisper, and speaking as tenderly as a tongue, whose tender edge had been whittled off by fifty years of hard usage in the bustle of life, would allow him, "however much the more amiable feelings of my nature may be awakened by the contemplation of a moonlight scene, I have hitherto had no object to concentrate them on: they have existed to make me feel only the more lonely and the more desolate at my bachelor hearth."

Lizzy, I am quite positive, never heard a syllable of this speech; her mind was altogether absent, yet my poor master proceeded in the same strain. "Hitherto, I say, because within these last few days they have found the long sought-for object—my heart has discovered a being to cherish and to love. Need I say that—" Here he lifted his unoccupied arm, and was about to clasp her hand within his own, when away dashed Lizzy.

"Hush, hush," cried she; tittering all the while with newly excited laughter. "Do you not

hear footsteps approaching?" She placed herself in a listening attitude. "Yes, my ears have not deceived me; it must be so, and yonder—"

She did not wait to finish the sentence, but darted into the shade of the old firs, leaving Smithson too panic-struck and disappointed to follow her.

CHAP. VIII.

WHICH BIDS ADIEU TO THE "FIRS."

"Now, without jesting or joking, Mr. Pencil-case," observes some young lady-reader, (that I may be honoured with many such is my earnest hope,) "I am not half pleased with Miss Lizzy for the exceedingly rude manner in which she parted from your kind master, Mr. Smithson, at the conclusion of your last chapter; running so giddily away after something she hears in the distance. Really the gentleman talked very prettily considering his age."

"Exactly the thoughts, madam, that passed through my own mind at the time; but, like yourself, I was then ignorant of the attraction which existed in the footsteps we had heard."

- "And whose footsteps were they, pray?"
- "Patience, my dear young lady, and I will tell you."

My master, when he found himself thus suddenly left alone, fell into a brown study. He could not divine the cause of Lizzy's laughter. "Hem!" said he, half aloud, "I do not see any thing particularly jocular in what I addressed to her;" and then to all appearance he commenced meditating in what way he should renew the conversation on his late companion's return. Whether he had or had not concocted a satisfactory speech for the purpose I cannot determine. The truth was, if he had, there was not the least occasion for it, since when Lizzy reappeared it was not singly. The footsteps, it was evident, were those of a tall handsome young man, who now had possession of the arm which had been so cruelly withdrawn from Smithson.

- "Mr. Smithson," said Lizzy, when they came up,
 "allow me to introduce Ned Aller"—
- "Edward Allerton, sir, at your service," interrupted her companion, playfully raising his forefinger to her lip and upwards to his hat, accompanying the

action with a polite bow. A very stiff one from my master was all the reply.

I was rather struck at the familiarity apparent between the two. For the young lady to abbreviate the stranger's Christian name in the manner she had done, and for the latter to follow it up as above described, argued a well understood acquaintance between the parties. I naturally drew my own conclusions, which in the sequel proved correct. Perhaps my master had deduced similar ones. As the trio pursued their way to the house, he did not so much as open his mouth. The others, however, did not seem to miss his conversation. They had so much laughing and talking to do themselves, that had Smithson been in a chatting humour he would have experienced great difficulty in getting a word in edgeways, and greater still in obtaining a listener.

The reception which the new comer met with from Mr. and Mrs. Jollywink was hearty in the extreme. It at once dissipated any remaining doubts in my mind with regard to the kind of terms on which he stood with Lizzy. In short, from what I had already observed, and from being present at a conver-

sation on the subject between Jollywink and my master, I am enabled to inform the reader that Mr. Edward Allerton was the acknowledged suitor of Miss Lizzy. Their acquaintance, it appeared, had commenced in infancy, the parents of both having resided in close neighbourhood. Childish friendship time had ripened into mutual love, and when young Allerton at the age of eighteen, left his parental home to enter on a collegiate education, amid abundance of tears shed at parting, they vowed eternal regard for each other, exchanged amulets and did various other things which every one else but lovers thinks remarkably foolish. Strange to relate, these youthful pledges had been faithfully kept. Allerton, in admiring the bright eyes near him, never forgot the fond heart afar, and always hastened homeward each returning vacation, more perchance for the purpose of renewing those promises of fidelity, than of visiting his parents; and, said Jollywink, when he had finished his tale, "I have reason to believe this will be pretty nearly the last time, for he is about quitting the University, and

Lizzy's giddy little heart will not beat easily until she is married. True, my wife and I shall miss her very much; but as Ned has a competency, I cannot find it in my conscience to refuse our consent—poz!"

To turn to the evening of the young man's arrival. He had to answer a multitude of inquiries after his friends and Lizzy's family, and how things went on at college.

"But why did you walk from town hither?" asked Mrs. Jollywink.

"Oh, I do-don't exactly know," replied Allerton, hesitatingly; "the night was inviting, and I thought the walk would be pleasanter than posting it." A sly glance he gave Lizzy explained to me the true reason.

"Young ladies are not in the habit of roaming out by moonlight alone' for nothing, eh!" observed Jollywink to my master, at the same time giving him an admonitory nudge, and winking comically at his new visitor. There was a general laugh at poor Lizzy's expense, in which Smithson did not join very

heartily. He was too low-spirited to laugh, and looked anything but amiably at his rival—rival did I say?—excuse me, there was no rivalship in the matter, for one had reached the goal. As for Ned Allerton, he was as happy as man could be. Then he had a flute with him, and the flute speedily did service at the side of Lizzy at the piano, the music being now and then interrupted by uproarious laughter from Jollywink, who was playing "dummy" against his wife and Smithson, and beating them as he said "into fiddle-strings."

The latter retired for the night in not the best imaginable humour with himself or the world in general, most unpardonably leaving me a second night on the parlour floor. He had a bad habit of twisting me round in his hand whenever he had nothing better to do, and particularly when in a thoughtful mood. This evening, thinking, I dare say, of the late pitiful failure which his attempt to launch the matrimonial boat had met with, he had drawn me from his pouch and was subjecting me as usual to all manner of contortions between his

fingers when I dropped from them. In his absence of mind he omitted to pick me up; the rest of the company being, I suppose, too much taken up with themselves to notice poor me, there I was left to pass my hours of rest as I best might. It was a great trial for my temper, but the reader and I both know very well that to vex or ponder over indignities is not the way to lessen them. Bearing them with a good grace is depriving them of more than half their bitterness; and he leads the happiest life who cares least for the treatment he receives in the world, whether it be derogatory to, or in enhancement of, his own self-esteem.

I was placed on the mantel-piece by the house-maid in the morning, and lay there cogitating on the past when Lizzy entered the room. She surveyed herself a few moments in the mirror above me, which, as there were some pretty features reflected in it, was excusable. Very likely it was merely to discover if her glossy ringlets were arranged as Ned Allerton wished, or her dress such as he admired.

. In a few moments the door opened, and Mr.

Edward Allerton appeared to pass judgment himself, and to—but why need I particularize what took place, my friends doubtless have it all in their mind's eye. Enough for me to say that in consequence of certain natural proceedings on the gentleman's part, the said ringlets became much disordered, whereupon the lady inflicted upon him a box on the ear, which would not have very seriously inconvenienced a flea, had one of those industrious little creatures been taking his morning perambulations there. At this juncture I heard some one descending the stairs. It was my master's footstep, but the lovers did not observe it.

"Ha! Mr. Ned," said the young lady, archly, "you have just come in time to displace a dangerous rival from my affections."

"In time to displace a rival! why, what do you mean, Liz?" and the youth rapturously raised her hand to his lips. (It was a beautifully soft hand as I can vouch, for it had been playing with me just before.)

"The gentleman you saw here yesterday evening,

an intimate friend of my uncle's," she replied, in a mock-serious tone.

"What, that old ninny! You little tease."

Suddenly the "old ninny" himself entered the breakfast-room. Mr. Edward Allerton was rather taken aback, Lizzy manifested a decided disposition to laugh, and my master darted an angry glance at both. He had heard their conversation. The usual morning salutation over, Lizzy presented me to my owner, who received his property with small thanks. For the first time, Smithson did not appear to me to have any desire of retaining the little hand before mentioned thrice the needful time within his own. The host and hostess speedily joined the party, and breakfast commenced. Scarcely was the meal concluded when some letters arrived for Smithson.

"What a man of business you are," said Jollywink. "Poz! those are more than I receive in a whole month. As you are impatient I dare say the ladies will allow you to read them."

My master accordingly commenced the perusal.

One was to inform him of the sudden death of a

member for the borough of W—, and to request his return without loss of time, as the opposition parties were already in the field. Smithson, knowing what an influential position he held in his native town, thought it incumbent upon himself to take part in the coming election of a new M.P. "Things will surely go wrong if I am not present," he observed to his friend when he had related the circumstances, and explained how needful it was that he should at once hasten home.

"Nonsense, man," exclaimed Jollywink, "you are not going for these six weeks yet."

Smithson looked aghast at his host. The idea of any important event taking place at W— without his presence seemed beyond his mental conception. He was for starting that very day, but his friends would not hear of it.

"Come, you must stay and have one more pop at the partridges. Here's Allerton, too, he will join us in the sport. That is," continued the old man, jocularly, "if he and Lizzy have not made up their minds to pass the day in some other manner." With a good deal of persuasion Smithson agreed to stay till the following Monday, "on which evening," as he wrote to his friend at W-, "I shall be with you without fail."

My own individual opinion was, that Allerton's arrival had something to do with my master's hasty departure from his hospitable friend's mansion, and the young lady had clearly no further charms for him. Strange how love alters the view. It places a pair of magic spectacles on the eyes, which have the peculiar property of changing simple prettiness into enchanting beauty, and trifling defects into delicious morsels of perfection. When the passion dies, figure and face are seen as nature moulded them. and perchance little failings perceived which love's spectacles hid from view. "What an infatuated creature I was," said Smithson, "to dream of marrying such a silly girl; and that impudent young coxcomb to call me 'an old ninny!' Well, I wish him luck of his choice." This was the last I ever

heard him ejaculate respecting Lizzy. His mind was for the remainder of his visit wholly occupied with thoughts of W— and the election.

Monday came, and with a thousand kind wishes and hopes that the visit would quickly be renewed, we parted from good old Jollywink, rattled through the avenue of noble firs, and in less than an hour were inside the coach on the high road for W—.

CHAP. IX.

MEDDLING WITH A POLITICAL MATTER WITHOUT BEING POLITICAL.

"ExTREMELY unfortunate, the death of our old M.P. Byvote just at this time, is it not, Mr. Smithson?" observed one of my master's peculiar friends to him when he had paid his accustomed visit to the reading-room before referred to on the morning after our arrival at home.

"Very, but the worst part of the business is, he was our man, and I fear we should have some difficulty in meeting with a fit person to succeed him. I suppose, however, you are already on the look-out."

"No time was to be lost, so we have—" The entrance of some other gentlemen led to an abrupt termination of the sentence; and a hasty whisper—"It will not do to be talking of our plans before these,"

induced the departure of my master and his friend from the room.

"What have you done?" said Smithson eagerly, when they had reached the street.

"By-the-bye, I was just going to say. Why, we at once petitioned G—— to come forward as the most popular man of the party in the neighbourhood, but he unfortunately declined on the score of expense, so we have sent a deputation to London, and of course some young sprig of aristocracy will quickly be met with, anxious to become a senator. A well-filled purse and a glib tongue is all we want, eh! Smithson?"

"And politics the right way," added my master.
"Some kind of an address has been issued I presume?"
he continued.

"No; how could there be with nobody to sign it?"

"Pooh, pooh," exclaimed my owner: "No address out! Bad policy that, very bad policy; we must put forth something, or the public will think we are not going to shew fight; I'll write one directly."

The glass-case on old Mr. Metal's counter was the

desk, (Metal it appeared was a staunch friend of their cause.) I was the writer, and the following was the production:

"TO THE INDEPENDENT FREEMEN AND ELECTORS OF W---. A VACANCY HAVING OCCUBRED IN YOUR PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION, IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE LAMENTED DEATH OF JOCELYN BYVOTE. Esq. YOU WILL SHORTLY BE CALLED UPON TO SELECT A FIT AND PROPER PERSON TO SUCCEED HIM IN THE ONER-OUS DUTIES WHICH HE SO LONG AND SO FAITHFULLY DISCHARGED. FELLOW TOWNSMEN, MAKE NO HASTY PROMISES; A GENTLEMAN IN EVERY WAY CALCU-LATED TO REPRESENT YOU IN PARLIAMENT WILL SHORTLY PROCEED TO SOLICIT YOUR SUFFRAGES IN PERSON. HE HAS LONG SHONE IN THE POLITICAL WORLD AS A DEVOTED CHAMPION OF CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTY, AND WILL PROVE EMINENTLY WORTHY OF THE HIGH DIGNITY AND TRUST YOU HAVE NOW TO CONFER. MEANWHILE BE NOT DECEIVED BY SPE-CIOUS PRETENCES, BUT RESERVE YOUR VOTES.

ONE OF YOURSELVES."
"There," said my master, "get that printed and

well circulated in the town, and we shall alarm the opposition camp, mark me."

I could scarcely help smiling at this description of an imaginary personage, and how very gullible persons would be to believe it; but I soon discovered that what usually goes by the name of "humbug," and what is more commonly styled "gammon," are commodities for which there is a large demand at election time, and that the demand seldom exceeds the supply.

Before evening all the town of W—— was beplastered with the above composition printed in immense type on prodigious sheets of paper. It was also exhibited in the shop-windows under the guise of a small handbill with a few sentences larger than the rest, just to draw the attention of the passers-by.

"Who is he?—what is he?—and where does he come from?" were the general inquiries, unanswerable because the pronoun referred to no one but an ideal creature of Smithson's brain, and whose parent was electioneering finesse. In short, the place was in a complete ferment; everybody seemed com-

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pletely busy doing nothing; everybody wore a consequential air, and everybody had his tongue in motion. Knots of politicians might be seen at the corners of the streets disburthening their minds to each other on the weighty business on hand. Great folks shook hands with little folks, whose horny palms had never met theirs for years; my master, for instance, was most condescending in this way, with a confidential query of "You will be with us, I hope," or, "Remember your promise last election," &c. &c., uttered at parting. Then there were secret conclaves at which he attended.

"Bless me," said Smithson, at one these, held on the following morning, "it will be very awkward if we do not receive some satisfactory communication from London by to-day's mail."

"That will it," observed another, "the opposition gains ground hourly, and we shall be too late in the field to have a chance of being victorious."

"True, money will go a great way," cried a third, "should a man with a deep pocket and careless as to the outlay be found, if it be at the eleventh hour,

we need not despair of success. Recollect how it was when G--- was elected."

"The state of parties is vastly altered since then," said my master, "vastly altered, and I much question whether we should be justified in bringing any man forward after to-morrow, or the next day at latest."

"Canvassing books will be ready to-night, so active operations can be commenced without delay," uttered a fourth.

Thus in fidgetty conversation did the party endeavour to spur Time on his way till the arrival of the mail with the expected communication. How crestfallen did the majority look at the tidings, that the requisite individual had not yet been met with. Some faint hopes were held out that more decided intelligence could be given by the next post.

"And now what is to be done?" said a desponding politician.

"Done," echoed my master, who seemed the only one who could act with vigour in the emergency, "we must industriously spread a report that the new candidate will be in W——to-morrow without fail."

- "And if to-morrow does not bring him?"
- "Pooh!" said Smithson, "it will be time enough to think of that question when to-morrow comes;" and the little man rose majestically, righted his spectacles, and walked out arm-in-arm with a friend.

As the candidate had not arrived, my master thought it necessary that his own ideal 'protégé' should be brought once more before the eyes of the good townsfolk, so he had the following announcement placarded without delay in letters suitable for a newspaper at Brobdignag.

"ELECTORS OF W—: YOUR FUTURE REPRE-SENTATIVE WILL PERSONALLY VISIT YOU TO-MOBROW WITHOUT FAIL. RECEIVE HIM WITH OPEN HEARTS AND HANDS, AND HIS TRIUMPH WILL BE CERTAIN."

Smithson was, as the reader may well imagine, closely questioned by many on the subject, because if any one was in the secret Jonas Smithson must be. My master having nothing to communicate, looked as though he had an immense quantity of information, and let fall a few passing remarks, so that his hearers fully believed he knew all about the birth,

parentage, and education, public and private career of the would-be legislator. These people told their friends, their friends had other friends to retail to, and the natural result was (what my master by-the bye wished) the opposition could not extort a promise. Luckily for the credit of Smithson and his associates a gentleman glorying in the name of the Honorable Mr. Lacsents was, after the lapse of another day, ferreted out by the deputation, for the avowed purpose of representing the borough of W—in parliament, but on his part for the highly laudable and extremely patriotic design of obtaining the dignifying M.P. at the end of his patronymic.

The Honorable Mr. Lacsents, to look at him as he stepped out of his travelling carriage, scarcely realized to my mind the flourishing announcement of the coming stranger which my master had promulgated. The plain fact was that the Honorable Mr. Lacsents was a bit of a green-horn, with an empty noddle but a full purse. Both well furnished would have been the more desirable, but as Smithson justly observed—he was more easily led by the nose. The

Honorable Mr. Lacsents, on being introduced by the deputation to the leaders of the party, said it gave him inconceivable pleasure to make each of their acquaintance; he presumed they were well acquainted with his principles, which I suppose they were, for a long address written and composed by my master and the rest of them in conclave, which was immediately introduced for his perusal and signature, met with his hearty approbation. The Honorable Mr. Lascents was evidently ready to do anything to become an M.P., and was in fact merely the lever with which Smithson and his friends were to move the constituency of W---. Whether he really had any principles, or whether he knew the difference between politics and pea-sticks seemed a perfect matter of indifference. "You elect me, and I will vote for you," was the tacit agreement—and what could be more straightforward-what indeed!

Next morning the Honorable Mr. Lacsents and his friends proceeded to canvass the town. He was personally introduced to the voters, by some of whom he was received with the blandest smiles, by others with disapproving glances. My master carried a book, and another gentleman carried a book, wherein they entered the number of promises they received in the shape of so many crosses, and the number of the enemy in the shape of round cyphers. The candidate undertook the bowing and scraping, and hand-shaking department, his companions explained his political opinions, which as they were not always held out alike, it struck me were in some measure suited to the known tenets of each particular voter. Those of the constituency who boasted wives, had their better moieties introduced to the honourable personage, and I could not fail to remark what an impression his highly cultivated whiskers, his gold-chain, and polite demeanor made on them. On the whole the result of the first day's labours was very satisfactory; the crosses exceeded the noughts by many. Another address was issued, stating the flattering manner in which the new candidate had been received: how that if half his promises of support were kept, he must inevitably be placed at the head of the poll on the day of election, and winding up with a romance, that his opponent had not the shadow of a chance.

The Honorable Mr. Lacsents' committee held a meeting in the evening, whereat divers orthodox ways of spending that gentleman's money were resolved on, such as throwing open the public-houses, engaging a band to parade the town, with numerous unwashed urchins, sons of some of the enlightened and immaculate electors, to shout "Lacsents for ever," and to carry placards conveying the same sentiment perceptibly to the eye.

Next day the canvass was commenced with renewed ardour, but as it chiefly lay among the lower classes, it wore rather a different phase; I need not describe the threats, bribes, promises, and intimidations, held out to procure their suffrages, and how honestly and nobly several asserted their rights to vote in an independent manner, despite the cutlass glances of their superiors.

I recollect one instance particularly. Smithson drew the man aside after the candidate and his other friends had passed on.

"White," said he (that was the man's name—he was a hard-working cobbler, and lived in a humble stall on the outskirts of the town,) "White, you will vote for Mr. Lacsents, my friend, will you not?" This was uttered in an exceedingly mild tone of voice.

"I hope no offence, your honor," replied the cobbler, "but you knows well enough as how I always did vote t'other side, and in course shall again."

Smithson repeated his request, and offered to do something for the man's family, if he would vote as he wished, but White replied to the same effect as before.

- "White," replied my master sternly, "you owe your landlord a year's rent."
- "The worse for me I do," said he, "but he has kindly promised me time, and I shall soon be able to discharge it."
- "White," rejoined Smithson angrily, "if you refuse to vote for Mr. Lacsents I shall speak to your landlord, and he will put in a distress at once,"

"And then I shall be ruined," said the poor man, with a tear rising in each eye, "just 'cos I ain't at liberty to vote as I ha' done always; but I will vote as I like," said the man boldly, "and you won't bring poverty to rags, surely, your honor."

White little knew how far electioneering strife will turn the better feelings out of the breast. Smithson who at another time would have shrunk at the proceeding, immediately carried his threat into execution, and White on the very day that he went up to vote as his inclination directed, was turned out of house and home for the great crime of acting independently.

There were many of the humbler tradesmen whose promises were obtained by the mere threat of withdrawing patronage. Several of the scum were gained over by the simple promise that they should have as much beer as they pleased; and then there were others who asked and had a certain price for their voices. Thus matters proceeded until the day of nomination.

CHAP. X.

CONTAINING A FULL AND TRUE ACCOUNT OF THE ELECTION OF AN M.P., FOR THE BOROUGH OF W-.

If my master had been nervous, fretful, and snappish during the canvass of the Honorable Mr. Lacsents, it was nothing, compared to the temperament he was in on the morning of the nomination. He sat down to his solitary breakfast in about as unfit a state to enjoy that meal as the reader can well imagine. Filling his cup from the tea-kettle, adding sugar to the slop-basin, and pouring the milk into his tea-pot, were only a few of the absurdities of which he was guilty. They were all outward and visible signs to me of how much his whole mind was engrossed in the successful return of the candidate he supported. When Mrs. Sims, in answer to a

summons from the bell, appeared and enquired of him, "Please, Sir, what did you want?" she had some vague reply, such as, "Yes; he'll certainly vote with us—promised me faithfully yesterday:" whereat the good dame would hold up her hands in astonishment, and exclaim—"Lack-a-day—my poor master; this is what comes all along of these 'lectioning affairs."

At length the repast was concluded, and Smithson betook himself to the hotel of the Honorable Mr. Lacsents, where that gentleman was holding a kind of levee. It was now arranged who should propose, and who should second; what topics should be dwelt on, what the honorable candidate should say that might touch the voters of W— on their weak side, and please their other halves; what promises should be made, which could be broken with the smallest inconvenience at some future time, when called upon to fulfil them; and what further proceedings could be taken that day to forward the cause. These and other preliminaries settled, the Honorable Mr. Lacsents, attended by a cavalcade of admiring friends

wended his way to the Town hall, where the nomination was to take place.

The opposing candidate (who it appeared was a retired grocer, of a neighbouring town), with his supporters, had arrived there previously, and taken up their seats on the right-hand of a grey-headed personage who sat higher and more conspicuously than the rest of the persons present, and was frequently addressed in the course of the proceedings, as, "the upright gentleman who presides over this meeting," or "the worthy Mayor of this town." Our party occupied the other side, after a vast deal of pushing and crushing through the motley crowd that filled the body of the hall.

The Honorable Mr. Lacsents and his companions had no sooner seated themselves than a volley of hisses saluted them from the opposite regions of the room, the excess of which insult was lessened by a tremendous cheering from parties in the immediate neighbourhood. The tumult thus created was most materially increased by an individual in a red cloak, ringing a bell, and calling out "Silence," till his face

was almost as red as his cloak, and several of the more temperate of the assemblage giving vent to their feelings in one simultaneous "Hush-sh." As for my master, he raised his arm as loftily as his diminutive stature would permit, and endeavoured by an authoritative waving of that member to calm the troubled mass. Had he tried to have straightened a knotted old oak with it he would have stood an equal chance of success. Quiet-that is to say, comparative quiet-returned of its own accord in a few minutes, and then the business of the meeting was entered upon, by the scarlet-clothed functionary announcing that the proclamation against vice and immorality was about to be read. This was the signal for fresh hubbub; nobody paid any attention to the tirade, and for the good effect it had, it might just as well have been so much heathen Greek. Something like tranquillity was restored, when the presiding officer rose to inform the assemblage what it had met within those walls to do. This gentleman seemed rather unaccustomed to public speaking, the few words he uttered were read from a paper

before him, and that in so nervous and low a tone as to be inaudible to every one, save those located near. But this was of no importance: whatever the real object of the meeting was, the aim of all present was manifestly to raise an uproar, or to applaud and cry down the different orators in obedience to directions previously given. Hence it will be quite out of my power to lay beneath the eyes of my friends the various speeches delivered on the occasion; and, indeed, were it in my power, it is a great query whether I should not have shrunk from the task of transcribing them, and certain am I that the reader would have been wearied in the perusal.

The first person that spoke, told his hearers a great deal apparently that they had heard before, and a good deal more that they did not care to hear. He eulogised the late member, but did not scruple to point out his faults. He fully explained to them what kind of a man the constituency of W— required, and that in Mr. Fig—the once upright tradesman, the then hospitable country gentleman—he flattered himself they had found him.

At this mention of the name of Fig, a vociferous shout of derision arose from the friends of the Honorable Mr. Lacsents, and an electrifying cheer from his opponents, while such sentiments as "He won't do," "Send him home," "Bravo for Fig," "Down with the Lacsents," resounded throughout the place. The speaker thought it best to bring his say to a conclusion, and therefore begged to propose his esteemed friend, Timothy Fig, Esq., as a fit and proper person to represent the ancient borough of W— in the High Court of Parliament.

With a running accompaniment of hisses and huzzas, another followed on the same side. This was one who had not much command of his temper, for in the course of his harangue, he made use of violent gesticulations, angry glances at our quarter, and other extraneous means to give effect to what his tongue delivered, which no doubt was highly edifying to those whose ears it reached. For myself, I caught not a syllable, except the monosyllable, "I—I—I," from time to time; whence it may be judged that the individual tuned much on one

string, and that string—himself. He of the red cloak now proclaimed "Silence," in return for which command he was politely told to "mind his own business," "shut his mouth," "tie his clapper," &c. &c. &c.

The Mayor then rose and asked whether any one else had a candidate to propose, simultaneously on which Mr. Jonas Smithson jumped on his legs, and audibly scraped his throat three times successively. He then signalled his friends, and a universal cry of "Bravo!" was raised by them. He next frowned at his political enemies, and gave them distinctly to understand that he was not going to be put down by their slang-whanging, and so he commenced. Considering that I had been for several days aiding him to prepare the piece of elocution delivered on this occasion, it was not so bad. My master was a little man, but he had a great mind; and what he lost in size, he made up with energy: altogether, no one was more attentively listened to, nor more applauded throughout. He informed the company that he had never felt, in the whole course of his life, greater

pleasure than he did at that moment. (Now, with due deference to my master's superior judgment, I could scarcely rely on the truth of this assertion, seeing that at the particular moment, his face wore no very pleasing aspect, neither did his mind seem brimful of content). He owned himself utterly unable to acquit himself efficiently in the proud task allotted him-an expression which created a low murmur among the mob, and cries of "No, no." He then launched out into a profound dissertation on the leading political topics of the day, and pathetically alluded to the undeviating support that their late ever-to-be-lamented member, Mr. Byvote, had given to all the great measures which had from time to time been brought forward during his parliamentary career, for the promotion of the real welfare of every class within the empire. He feared they should never look upon his like again; but he meanwhile, flattered himself, and he believed his fellowcitizens had just ground to hope, that were the honorable gentleman he was about to propose as a candidate for their suffrages, elected, of which he

had not the shadow of a doubt, they would have filled the untimely vacancy with honour to themselves and manifest advantage to the country. (These last remarks brought down alarming shouts and hisses from the friends of Mr. Fig, immense applause from Lacsents' party, and a condescending bow from the latter gentleman himself. This interruption gave my master an opportunity of taking his breath and wiping his forehead - excuse my being precise.) When the noise was calmed, off rattled his tongue as glibly as ever, and strange to say, he left the main purport of his speech to the last. It struck me that had he just proposed Mr. Lacsents, as a candidate, it would have answered equally as well as the long tirade he had inflicted on the assemblage; but then my master was fond of public speaking and the opportunity was too good a one to be lost. Poor man, he had his failings, and a superabundant partiality for hearing his own voice was one; but at this distance of time, all recollection of these have merged in the remembrance of his good qualities, and I cannot but look back at the days of our acquaintance as the happiest of my pilgrimage. But I am digressing.

On Smithson resuming his seat, the seconder rose and confidently told those present that he was unaccustomed to public speaking, a piece of information for which I dare say they felt themselves peculiarly obliged. His acquaintance with Mr. Lacsents had been a brief one; still it was one which had given him every insight of the character of that honorable gentleman; it was one he ardently hoped would be prolonged to an indefinite period with him, as the member for W—. He would not detain the meeting with his poor talk after the very able speeches that day delivered; and, therefore, begged leave to second the nomination of the Honorable Mr. Lacsents, as the representative of his native town, in Parliament.

The mob now thought it was high time it should take a part in the proceedings, and so effectually put a stop to their completion by a strife of tongues worthy of Babel. The scarlet-habited creature, for the fiftieth time, made himself hoarse in his efforts to restore order; the mob kept it up well against all opposition, for at least a quarter of an hour, and then rested of its own free pleasure, like a lion, ready to shew its teeth again when occasion offered. Next rose the Chairman, whom I heartily pitied, on account of his ridiculous inability. He wished to know if any other person had a friend to nominate for the distinguished post of M.P. for W—, which no one answering, he resumed his seat, evidently glad so much of his task was over.

Mr. Fig then gradually elevated himself above the rest to address the meeting. Mr. Fig looked a sedate old gentleman, more fitted to chat politics over a dinner-table than to spout political oratory on the floor of the House of Commons. Mr. Fig had a voice bearing a decided resemblance to the hum which half a dozen humble bees might be supposed to make, if they were penned up in a cask. He said but little, as he observed himself, "he had'nt much to say." He was a friend and a neighbour—the well-doing of W— was the uppermost thought in his heart. He need not explain his political

principles, they were known familiarly to all. He should, if returned to Parliament, be ever mindful of the trust reposed in him, his ear should be unceasingly open to the call of the humblest of his supporters. In spite of the malpractices of his opponents, he looked forward with confidence to the close of the poll; but, at the same time, requested his friends not to relax their efforts in his behalf. During the delivery of his address, Mr. Fig was assailed by the Lacsentsites, with various allusions to his by-gone occupation, as for instance—"Now, old boy, what's the latest price of Bohea?" "Halloo, Fig, where's your apron?" "Oh! he's a sugary one," with divers others, too numerous to repeat.

He sat down, taking all in good part, whereupon the Honorable Frederick Lacsents, standing six feet two inches, exclusive of the bushy curls on his head, which measured nearly three inches more, brought his lungs into action. He had come, he said, a stranger among the citizens of W—, to canvass for the honor of representing them in the Imperial

Council of the nation; but it was by the request of several of the most influential amongst themselves.-(Humbug, thought I.) He had personally paid his respects to all, and had met with a reception favorable beyond his most ardent expectations—(Humbug again, thought I, for it was only the previous evening I had heard him remark to my master, how dubiously he had been received.) He had long heard of the prevalence of those tenets in Wwhich it was his glory and his pride to hold-(Humbug again, thought I; query whether you ever heard of the place before you arrived, just a week previously.) He regretted with them, the death of their late honorable member, and revered that gentleman's memory from the good things related of him by his friends.—(Humbug! I inwardly exclaimed.) Mr. Lacsents here entered into an explanation of his own opinions, interlacing in a clever manner the various promises that had been made for him by his friends on particular points to particular voters in the course of his canvass. He followed up, by stating that if elected, the interests of the

town would be his own interests; the greatest joy of his life would be to serve one of his constituents, no matter of what age, rank, or party.—(What humbug! I said to myself.) Whether successful or not, he should never forget the kindnesses he had experienced at their hands.—(Humbug again, thought I.) He felt morally certain that his cause, the cause of liberty, justice, and right, would triumph, and finally thanked his hearers for the patient attention they had granted him throughout, a conclusion he need not have come to, since about one-sixteenth of the whole speech only reached the ears of the great majority.

The mob took advantage of the momentary silence to have a little amusement on its own account, and at its conclusion, the Mayor stated that two candidates had been proposed, as fit and proper persons, to represent the Borough of W——, in the High Court of Parliament, viz.: Timothy Fig, Esquire, and the Honorable Frederick Lacsents. Those who were in favour of the former gentleman he called upon to hold up their hands; immediately a host of bejewelled

and besmeared paws were raised. Those who were favorable to the latter, were next requested to do so likewise; and the election being declared to have fallen, by this show of hands, on Mr. Fig, his friends set heels and palms to work with thrilling effect, while the disappointed Lacsentsites got up a counter-hiss.

My master, agitated beyond measure, rose to demand a poll on behalf of his friend. A vote of thanks (it should have been a vote of "ridicule) was formally given to the chairman for his efficient conduct in the chair. He said a few words which the W —— papers styled "returning thanks in a neat speech." A few rotten eggs and other missiles flew about the room, and the meeting separated to prepare for the morrow's contest.

It was an eventful day in the annals of the ancient borough of W——, that on which the Honorable Frederick Lacsents and Timothy Fig, Esquire, entered the lists as competitors for the high prize that the constituency had to bestow. It was eventful to

Mrs. Sims, because her master, in his nervous anxiety and excitement, had fractured the best china tea-pot she had in the house. A friend was breakfasting with him, and while replenishing the visitor's cup, he dropped the said tea-pot from his hands, whereby the spout came in unwelcome contact with the table and parted company for ever with its body. Poor Mrs. Sims! what a fluster the good dame worked herself into at the accident; one would have fancied part of the worthy woman's soul inhabited that piece of porcelain clay. How she did fret, fume, and vex. "The best tea-pot—the cheeny one what has been in the house ever since I come myself, and that's twenty years ago, save a few weeks, and to think as it should be broke by the master hisself at last; but," and here she wound up in her usual way, "it all comes of these 'lectioning affairs." Smithson, cold-hearted creature that he was, would not have cared at that moment, I verily believe, had he broken all the venerable China tea-pots in the world. His whole heart and soul lay in the success of his candidate; he paid no attention to his housekeeper's remonstrances; said

something about the handle being very hot, and soon after left the room with his friend.

"I shall go," said he, "and be the first to register my vote for the Honorable Frederick Lacsents."

True enough he was. The poll-booth, at his arrival, was scarcely opened, the clerks had not nibbed their pens, neither had the Mayor, whom I at once recognized, satisfactorily finished the employment of his tooth-pick, after his morning meal. On Smithson presenting himself, the tooth-pick disappeared, the clerks in a great hurry dipped their quills in the inkstands, and, amidst loud cheers and hisses, my master's voice was entered on the books in favor of Mr. Two or three quickly followed on the same side; then came a string of Mr. Fig's supporters, and then some in our interest, among which latter. Smithson met with a few of his fellow-committeemen; with them he took his departure for the committee-room. We had some difficulty in forcing a way through the motley crowd collected round the hustings. Such tag-rag and bobtail as it consisted of, too! Such pushing, and hallooing, and hooting. My master foolishly carried me in his hand and every moment I expected to fall. Alas! what a mangled mass I should then soon have become—what a multiplicity of hob-nails would have passed over me ere any one could have assisted me in my fallen state. Luckily, I met with no such mishap; but Smithson's hat was less fortunate, it was knocked off with the end of a pole, at the top of which was exhibited in stupendous letters—"Fig for W——." The bearer a ragged, impudent rascal, seemed to think he had done something extremely beneficial to the Fig party in the manœuvre.

"Vy doesn't you Lacsents covies put on your tiles tighterer?" shouted the ragamuffin.

"That's vy," said a tattered and torn supporter of that gentleman, and he followed up his observation by giving the placard carrier a tremendous blow on the left cheek. Now commenced a regular uproar, fisticuffs in good earnest, from which Smithson and his party were glad to escape, leaving his hat a prey to the ruthless mob. They at length gained the committee-room, from the windows of which, we

had a good view of the electioneering proceedings, near the polling-booth. There were the two belligerent individuals fighting manfully in the centre, with a host round them, all participating in the combat as if it was the most glorious fun imaginable. There was a wooden-legged drummer, who used his stick with telling effect on the side of the placard man or Fig party, while on behalf of the Honorable Mr. Lacsents, there was a six-feet high biped with a broom-handle, which he wielded aloft and brought down on the heads of his opponents with wonderful dexterity. By and by, a strong constabulary force assembled, the consequence whereof, was the appearance of sundry green bludgeons among the crowd and the seizure of the ringleaders. So the Lacsents party cried "Lacsents for ever!" the Figs shouted their rallying cry, and the noise which my master's unoffending hat had originated came to an abrupt conclusion. There were many more such during the election, arising, very likely, from similar trifles. I present the reader with this as a specimen, and now

draw his attention more particularly to the committee-

Here were the Honorable candidate's principal friends sitting round a table busy, or fancying themselves busy, receiving the voting papers as they were forwarded from the poll-booths. Some were employed in reckoning up the numbers for each candidate, others were scanning the sheets over to see who had and who had not voted, and who had kept, broken, or been better than their promises, and the rest were conversing in respect of particular voters, and who among themselves could best induce each to vote "the right way."

"The right way!"—yes; that was the expression, and I well recollect, a very strange one I considered it. Of course, if there is a right way, there must be a wrong way, and in this instance, there being only two ways, every one who voted for Mr. Fig was guilty of an error. But, thought I, how can so numerous a body as our opponents rush into a wrong path thus heedlessly? and I ultimately

resolved, that it was the same at elections as it is in the rest of the world's doings, namely, to think and act similarly to him who uses the expression, "the right way" is to think and act rightly, while to do otherwise is to be decidedly and irretrievably in the wrong.—What say you, reader?

From time to time papers with the only "correct state of the poll" were thrown from the windows; and a most amusing exhibition it was to see the scrambling and quarrelling to obtain them, as if they were so many pieces of money. Bloody noses were consequently plentiful, and black eyes during the whole election were by no means scarce articles. Every sixth individual you saw was tipsy, and with good reason, for all the public-houses were most disinterestedly thrown open by the opposing candidates to their respective supporters; therefore, every one thought it tantamount to high treason not to take the opportunity of drinking success to his favorite, honor to old England, and confusion to the other party. The close of the first day's poll, according to the issued accounts of the Lacsents'

committee, gave him a majority of twenty votes over his opponent; as my master justly remarked, "people do like to be on the leading side, and though we really are a few behind old Fig on the list, it is as well they should fancy the contrary." Humbug again, thought I—in fact, humbug appeared to me the ruling principle throughout; and I was perfectly ashamed of some of the tricks resorted to by my master and his friends, to procure Mr. Lacsents' return: but the general observation was, "Pooh, pooh! everything's fair at election time."

The public excitement seemed to abate much after the first day. On the evening of the second, the Honorable Mr. Lacsents had the advantage of Mr. Fig by some half dozen votes; our committee gave him a nominal majority of four times that number; the third day's poll reduced that majority to two. On the fourth, Mr. Fig actually headed the list by eight votes, a fact which threw my master into agonies of fear. An extraordinary meeting was held that night, Mr. Lacsents was asked how deep his purse was, and how far his supporters might veature

to dive therein? To which straightforward question the honorable gentleman magnanimously replied,—
"As deeply as you please, provided my success can be secured."

"Well, he is a downright trump," whispered a stout old gentleman, to my master.

"That he is," replied Smithson, "just the fellow we want."

An address was forthwith issued, drawn up by the committee and bearing the signature of Frederick Lacsents, wherein he expressed to the electors of W—, his heartfelt thanks for their support up to that moment, how that, though his opponent by the basest and most corrupt means had gained a trivial advantage over him on the day's poll, he (Lacsents) looked forward to the final close with undiminished confidence. He felt morally certain the inhabitants of W— would not allow themselves to be misrepresented by Mr. Fig, in Parliament, and called upon his friends to redouble their exertions in his behalf. "My success," he concluded, "will then be triumphant—the defeat of my enemies, complete."

This manifesto, or perhaps, certain other means brought to bear by the committee, had a visible effect on the fifth day's polling, which was a little more brisk than its forerunners. Mr. Lacsents reduced his opponent's majority to two, quite a restorative to the drooping spirits of my master and his friends; it enabled them to set about their sixth day's labour with renewed energy.

This being the final day, the noise and bustle re-commenced with ten-fold vehemence; fighting and shouting, drinking and idleness universally prevailed; and to tell the reader half the doings of Mr. Lacsents' committee, is quite beyond my faculties. Persons who had not voted among the scum of the constituency and were found unfavorable to the cause, were rendered by liquor quite incapable to register their votes for Mr. Fig; others who were halting between two opinions were argued over by that most potent argument—gold; some, careless which side they took, were plied with drink to such an extent as would place them just in a condition to be led up to the hustings and there vote as dictated

to, while many were forcibly carried out of town to remain "in nubibus" till after the poll-books had closed. The better class of the unpolled were personally called upon by members of the committee, and when one failed, another would try what he could do; and where a vote could not be obtained, a promise to be neutral was sometimes granted.

At length the eventful hour of five arrived, and the poll-booths closed both to friend and foe. Who do you think, reader, then headed the list? From the account kept by our committee, Mr. Lacsents had a clear majority of eight, while the opposition camp gave out that it was only two, and that on a revision of the returning officer's books, Mr. Fig would hold the proud position of M.P. for W—. Of course, this state of things made my master extremely nervous, while he believed that their own was the correct return; yet, there still might have been a mistake made, and until this doubt was removed, there was no peace for him.

On the next day at twelve, the returning officer announced the true state of the poll, which was—

Por	Mr.	Lecs	ents	••••	••••	•••••		507
Por	Mr.	Fig	•••••	• • • • • •	•••••	•••••	••••	502
							-	

Majority in favor of the former... 5

He, therefore, declared the Honorable Frederick Lacsents duly returned to serve in Parliament for the ancient borough of W—.

The new Member then went through the usual formalities and was afterwards chaired, being escorted round the town with music, flags, and banners, and a host of his party. He bore his honors with becoming dignity, bowed to the ladies up at the balconies, flinched not at the hisses bestowed on him by his opponents, and looked, as Mr. Jonas Smithson observed, every inch an M.P.

The whole proceedings wound up the next day with a dinner, whereat numerous highly patriotic sentiments were delivered and extensive promises entered into by the Honorable Mr. Lacsents, which, whether he fulfilled or not, I am unable to say; at all events, he took his departure the very next day richer in honors but emptier in pocket, and he never

showed his face but four times in W— during the remaining three years of my connection with Smithson, viz., at the annual races that took place, and once when a dissolution was expected. As it may be considered part of the duty of a representative to absent himself from the town he represents, I will not venture an opinion on the matter, and now take leave of him and the reader for this chapter of my confessions, assuring my friends that the next will contain the history of a most important event in my chequered life.

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CHAP. XI.

WHICH DEALS IN THE DISAGREEABLE.

TWELVE months had elapsed after the events related in the preceding chapter, twelve months checquered with the usual quantum of lights and shades, chances and changes, robbing my master of a few more locks of hair from his scantily supplied pate, and turning those that were left more to the silvery hue of old age, when, one morning, as Smithson was sitting at breakfast, he received among his numerous letters, a dispatch from Jolly-"What can this mean," he exclaimed, wink. opening it, "the old man is not much given to letter writing, something important I should think." An enclosure it contained fell on the floor. "Ha, ha! now the secret is out," cried Smithson aloud, just as if he had half a score listeners, instead of one

superannuated member of the feline tribe in the room with him. A smile crossed his face as he picked, up two cards, one large, the other small, both very highly glazed, and fastened together particularly neatly, with silver cord.

"Mr. Edward Allerton,"—"Mrs. Edward Allerton," said my master, reading from the cards. "So Lizzy is married at last. But what says Jollywink?" Jollywink's note was characteristic enough; it ran thus:

The Firs, Oct. 18,-

DEAR JONEY,—Here am I, chained down with the gout, and the pheasants as plentiful as they can well be—confoundedly tormenting, and that's "poz;" and now there's my undutiful niece run away with the giddy youngster, leaving her old uncle to fret over his aches and pains without a single tear. Still she was a dear good little Lizzy, and if her husband, years hence, love her a tithe as well as he seems to now, she will be very happy. But for old friendship's sake, Joney, come and cheer up my spirits under her loss; Mrs. Jollywink and I shall be delighted to see you, so come you must. Shelve business, and take pity on

Your forlorn

JOLLYWINE.

P.S.—I send the enclosed by Lizzy's special direction.

Smithson pocketed the letter, and fell into a think-

ing mood, gazing steadfastly at the fire, his right foot on the hob, his left hand thrust into his waistcoatpocket, a posture he was much given to assume when in a brown study, "Married, eh!" muttered he, and examining the cards over and over again, doubting as it were, the reality of the event. "So Lizzy is now Mrs. Edward Allerton—Mrs. Edward All"—here he halted.

Of course I had my train of reflection, as I lay on the table watching my master, on whom I certainly did not think the intelligence would have made such an impression. "So Mr. Jonas Smithson," thought I, "you are picturing to yourself, I dare be bound to say, how preferable would your condition have been had you chosen some young damsel years back, to be your fondly loving wife to share your joys and your sorrows, and after a companionship through life's summer days, to solace your declining hours, perhaps you would have no objection to be Ned Allerton himself, although you once called his charming little spouse a saucy hussy. But how is it my worthy master, you did not see the charms of a wedded life long ago?"

I was interrupted in my thoughts by his suddenly seizing me and slipping my pencil up and down between his forefinger and thumb with great rapidity. "Happy fellow," he ejaculated, and then he gazed round his solitary apartment, when I saw something like a liquid circle under his eyelid, nevertheless he checked the career of his imagination. "Pooh, nonsense, am I not happy too?" It was all very fine for him to wind up his cogitation thus, but nothing could be plainer than that he would have felt at that precise moment far happier, had there been a Mrs. Jonas Smithson to occupy the other side of his bachelor hearth,

But anxious as he might be to pay a visit to his old school companion, it was quite impossible. He was then the chief committee man superintending the building of a new parish church, and to "shelve" this—phew—w—w! what an idea, all would be done wrongly in his absence, not one stone would be placed properly on another, and as it was, scarcely a stone was laid without his presence; there he was, perambulating the scaffolding, running up and down

break-neck ladders, directing this, that, and the other, morning, noon, and evening, with indefatigable industry. That was a strange affair throughout, the church building, it was like everything else in W-, not to be done without a vast deal of quibbling and quarrelling, parish meetings, and committee meetings, party divisions, and private disputes. First, there was a grand question raised whether the old church was not sufficient without the erection of a new one; this point settled, the vestry came to loggerheads on the question of site, then on the plan to be selected, and lastly who should be the contracting builder,—lastly did I write—quite a mistake. The poor church was made one continued bone of contention from beginning to end, and when it was completed, to read the comments of the two adverse local newspapers, how amusing. Said the one-"We congratulate the committee on the completion of their noble and pious work. The church is a beautiful piece of architecture, simple and yet grand, elegant, and yet substantial, a perfect specimen of its particular style,

and truly a monument of the good taste of all those who have been concerned in rearing the stately pile." Said the other, in concluding its account of the consecration-"And now for a few words on the church itself. Harsh though the expression may seem, we do not hesitate to pronounce it a vile piece of masonry, destitute alike of all regularity of proportions, and elegance of style. Style, by-the-bye, it has none; the grand aim appears to have been to make the building as incongruous as possible. The site itself is ill chosen. Heartily do we wish that the management of the work had fallen into fitter bands; the town would perchance have then had a structure of which it might be proud, instead of an unsightly heap like the present, of which it has good reason to be thoroughly ashamed."

Such were the conflicting opinions expressed by these journals; as the editors always made it a point to write one against the other, I did not set either down as correctly judging, and only insert their criticisms here, as an instance of the futility of endeavouring to please all, and how small the thanks are a man receives for concerning himse in public or private affairs which do not personally affect himself.

It was a short time after this that my master, in an evil hour for me, took it into his head to purchase a cheap albata metal production, consisting of a case with slides at both ends, being in fact a pencil and pen-holder combined. Nasty upstart thing! how I hated it; not that I repined at being less employed by Smithson than heretofore; far from it, the reflection that I, an old and faithful servitor, was pushed on one side to make way for such a mongrel, this was the cause of my vexation, this gave rise to all my grief, to every cross word I gave my new companion. The creature behaved itself well enough, had fewer impertinent airs than I expected, and doubtless we should have become eventually tolerable friends, had I indulged in a little condescension and not held my head up quite so mightily. We were usually dwellers in the same pocket, and every time my master's hand dived in, and passing me by, laid hold of the albata make-believe, it

cost poor miserable me a groan. Experience had not taught me that it was I myself that created my unhappiness, not my companion. I had not then learnt that it is possible to be contented under all circumstances, when resolution determines the right way, and that it also is possible to imagine misery where no misery really exists. Two weary years, (I have passed wearier since) rolled away, and vainly I longed for a separation. Fondly I hoped that my master would throw away his new purchase in disgust, or lose it, anything in short to rid me of its society; alas, little thought I of the manner in which that wished-for event would at length come to pass, that. when the day of separation came, it would not only sever me and my rival, but myself and my owner also.

It occurred one stormy autumnal night, Smithson had been dining with a friend some distance from W——, and was returning home at rather a late hour on horseback and alone. The moon, which had shone out brightly at starting, quickly became overshadowed with dense clouds, and a dull drizzling

rain commenced, not by any means comfortable or pleasant; the road, too, was none of the most frequented. My master had completed about half his journey, and was traversing a lonely, cheerless part of his way, with plenty of thick-leaved trees on the one side, and some boggy waste ground on the other, when a low whistle caught his ear.

"Hush! what's that?" he murmured, reining in his horse, and he vainly peered through the darkness, but could distinguish nothing. Now Smithson was no coward; I had often heard him utter the boldest sentiments at public meetings, offering to confront innumerable foes with true oratorical daring; but, then, good reader, courage with a host of applauding friends round, in a dining-hall, and courage by oneself, in a dark, lonely lane, at a late hour of night, are two qualities widely differing. "Pshaw! it was my fancy very likely," said he, so setting spurs to his steed he went off at a sharp trot.

Just at the moment his course was suddenly arrested, and a loud voice demanded his moveables. "Come, fork out," cried another tongue.

"My good fellows, I have nothing," said my master, rather quaking in spirit, at the same time unbuttoning his great-coat, to seek a pistol he had in his inner pocket. (Smithson never travelled at night without a pistol.)

I had then an opportunity of seeing by whom we were thus untimely arrested, the clouds at the moment breaking for the moon's rays to reach the earth. There were two great ruffians with masks on their faces, one had powerfully seized the bridle, and the other clutched my master's right arm.

"Hands off, villain." cried he, pulling the trigger of his pistol, but it missed fire.

"Ho, ho! that's the trick, is it?" said one of the wretches, and in a twinkling, Smithson was forced from the saddle, and laid senseless on his back in the road. His pockets were ransacked instanter, his watch, purse, pocket-book all were seized. How I trembled at their boldness, and shuddered at the idea of falling into their hands, sometimes flattering myself that they would leave me untouched. Vain hope, I followed the rest, and both the pads were employ-

ing themselves in conveying my poor master, who lay stunned and senseless all the while, to the road-side ditch, when the sound of distant wheels was heard.

"Come, be quick, Bill," exclaimed the one with an oath, or we shall be nabbed.

So saying the pair left Smithson to his fate, and scampered off into the woods as hard as their legs could carry them, just as a carriage came in sight.

CHAP. XII.

WHICH BRINGS ME TO ANOTHER VICISSITUDE IN MY CAREER.

What a change had the lapse of a few minutes made in my position. From being the inhabitant of the waistcoat pocket of an independent gentleman, to be located in the vile pouch of a robber, a midnight highwayman; was it not a wretched degradation? Yes, there I lay, with a few musty halfpence, and a horridly smelling tobacco-box for companions; compared with these the albata case was a princely associate, and thereby I learnt a lesson which I have never since failed to remember, viz., how ridiculous it is to judge of merit by comparison. For instance, hitherto I had formed an opinion prejudicial to my late associate, because I considered him beneath me, now that I had fallen into company so

much lower, he rapidly rose in my estimation; although my albata acquaintance always had been and still must be *the same* with regard to intrinsic qualities, neither better nor worse.

The men proceeded in their course through the wood until they arrived at a small open space of ground, surrounded on all sides by trees and bushes, where they stopped.

"You didn't kill the fellow, did you, Bill, with the blow you gave him?" said the one.

"No fear of that," was the reply; "it was a stunner though, and saved us a good deal of trouble. But supposing we sees what plunder there be."

With that both shewed what they had eased my late poor master of. I was brought forth with the rest, and so can describe their subsequent doings. The pocket-book seemed chiefly to occupy their attention; from their conversation they expected to meet with a pretty round sum in it; if so, they were sadly disappointed, for there was no money to be found.

"It strikes me as how we have done a devilish

poor night's work, Tom," observed the man styled Bill.

"Stop a bit, man, perhaps the crither's pus ain't in sich an empty condition." This only yielded them four sovereigns and some silver, which they at once divided; the moon shone brightly at the time, and I could see clearly all that passed.

"Then there's his ticker, and two or three other knick-knacks; this here thing among 'em," said the one robber, exhibiting me in his horny hand to his worthy companion.

"We'll turn it all into 'tin' the first opportunity," said the other; "and now let's be off to our quarters."

Their quarters, as they termed it, was the loft of an old detached barn, a short distance off. Here, on some loose straw the couple of wretches lay down for the night; no qualm came over their consciences, on the contrary, from their jocular way of talking; one would have fancied they had been performing some very laughable feat. For me there was no rest; my thoughts recurred to my own lamentable reverse of fortune; and, to the half-murdered Smithson. I pictured to myself poor Mrs. Sims' uncasiness at the non-arrival of her master and her ejaculations and anathemas against his assailants, when, if ever, he should arrive at home. I compared my situation in the highwayman's pocket with that I usually occupied on Smithson's dressing table, and my heart beat to the quick as the idea presented itself. I anticipated not a hope of being again restored to him, and gave myself wholly up to gloomy speculations on my future lot.

So passed the night. At an early hour in the morning my worthy couple of owners were on foot. It had been agreed between them that they should take separate courses to a distant town, where they appointed to meet after dusk. Both clad themselves in the most ragged attire, much worse than they had worn the previous night. These better garments were carried as a knapsack bundle over the shoulder, and the rags were donned to act the part of beggars. Thus did these rogues, who had ample supplies of money in their pouches, seek to impose upon the

charitable and humane, and they did it, by the bye, with very good success. He whom I accompanied feigned to have been discharged from an infirmary with an incurable wound in his arm, to prove which, he, when soliciting alms, would make a movement as if to lav it bare, which of course was checked by his hearers. He called at every house in his route, and seldom failed to receive a good repast or a few halfpence in reply to his tale of woe. Sometimes when he saw that his presence gave some alarm to the inhabitants of a lonely house he would put on the sturdy rogue guise, utter mysterious threats and lurk about the premises till the inmates were compelled to give him something in order to get rid of him, when he would go away grumbling and swearing without tendering the smallest thanks. He would dag after pedestrians that he chanced to meet, with untiring perseverance, and appropriated to his own use any small article he could lay hands on unseen.

It was not till a late hour in the evening that he rived at the proposed place of rendezvous, which his

friend had managed to reach a short time previously. This, it seemed, was their home, a mean, brokendown tenement, in the vilest portion of the town of E____, just the place for such as they to thrive in. There is, they say, honour among thieves, my owner, accordingly produced all his honorable earnings of that day, and the other thief followed his example. From the crazy old table I lay on, I had a satisfactory view of the apartment, if such it might be called, and will therefore devote a few lines to the description. The floor of the place was the original earth unencumbered by boards, paving stones, or any such luxurious additions; the covering was the old tiled roof. The furniture was unique and by no means abundant—a chair without any back rails; a most primitive three-legged stool, with two other chairs minus some indispensable parts, were the only seats; a few plates and other crockery-ware were disposed on a shelf; numerous shabby little pictures on the walls, and a heap of sundries in the one corner made up the visible garniture of the apartment. One of the chairs was inhabited by a

grey-headed old fellow, whose wrinkled countenance bore the word "villain" in pretty legible characters, and a little slattern of a girl sat on the other side of the fire-place, paying peculiar attentions to an iron pot which was simmering merrily over the blazing fire; these proved to be the father and sister of the two men.

The old man's eyes glistened with joy as he counted the gold, silver, and copper coin which his sons spread out before him, and he heard with smiles of approval their various adventures, with the tricks they had performed, and the manœuvres they had executed. "Well done, boys, well done!" he momentarily exclaimed in his feeble voice. But from time to time, as one more experienced in these illicit ways of getting a livelihood, he would interrupt his sons to give them instructions on certain points in the art of thieving, with a relish that was absolutely heart-sickening.

Well might Smithson speechify in public (as I had often heard him) on the vice that was abroad in the world! of whole families that obtained a living

by purloining from their fellow-creatures; of houses and homes, the very dens of roguery, where crime bred and reared and nourished an accursed brood; where vice shewed her brazen-face with irreclaimable effrontery. In my ignorance of the world, I believed he was making statements to suit his own purposes, and delineating circumstances which in reality had no existence, but when I witnessed the scene, the truth of his language was at once evident. Here was a father, himself no doubt the son of such a parent, lauding his sons for their misdeeds, encouraging them in their evil paths, and even teaching them, from a stock of knowledge gained by his longer life of knavery, how to become greater adepts in their base calling.

When the money had been fairly divided, and I, with various other little articles, was duly placed in a jug without spout or handle, which ornamented the chimney-shelf, the worthies sat down with right good will to the consumption of the contents of the iron pot, joined to a frothing jug of ale, which the girl had brought from a neighbouring

beer-shop. The eatables disposed of, gin, the everlasting companion of crime, was introduced, and a pipe of tobacco emitted its stupifying vapour from the mouths of the three men. Never shall I forget the conversation to which I was compelled to listen that night, with what calm deliberation the thieves laid plans for the morrow's sinful doings, with what careless consciences they resolved to carry them out. One project of the old man's, to rob a gentleman's residence a few miles distance from E—, gave his sons the greatest satisfaction. "My former crone, Bob Sharpe, put it into my head only this day," said he.

"And we're the chaps to be a-doing of it," said his hopeful progeny.

So they arranged how the thing should be executed, and then reeled half intoxicated to their sleeping-places.

The morning of another day came, and the two young men wandered forth to pursue the highway to the gallows; and the old man, habited in a respectable suit of faded black, to convert myself, with the watch, &c., into "tin," as it was styled in their slang language. To look at that venerable being with his tottering footsteps, his mock-innocent countenance, his flowing silvery locks, one could imagine him worthy of all the respect due to men of his years, (so easily can vice put on the outward signs of virtue.) To view him as he really was, the old hardened sinner, it was appalling indeed.

"Good morning, Mr. Gaynall," said the wretch, touching his hat as he entered the shop of that personage, apparently the repository for everything in the shape of furniture, wearing apparel, linen, jewellery, musical instruments; in fact, the room was crowded with articles of endless variety.

"Well, sir, and what can I do for you?" replied Mr. Gaynall, reaching out his hand to receive whatever might be forthcoming from the other's pockets.

"Here are a few articles," said the old man, producing them, "a few articles that have fallen into my hands in the course of business."

"Oh yes, yes, in the course of your business, I perfectly understand."

It was clear that Mr. Gaynall did perfectly understand. Any honest dealer of his class would have made some enquiries how such an individual had become honestly possessed of so many little articles to have them to dispose of, but Mr. Gaynall asked no questions, and the seller had no disagreeable answers to make. The pawnbroker was aware that a procedure of the kind would check his flourishing trade, and remove the greatest source of his profits.

"Ahem!" he continued, "a watch, seals, pencilcase, pistol; ahem! suppose we say £4 for the lot;" and he swept me with the rest off the counter, with a rapid movement, into a drawer beneath.

"It is too little, too little," remarked the hoary rascal; but he knew well he was at the mercy of the buyer, and I presently heard him shuffling out of the shop with his wages of evil.

The receiver is as bad as the thief, Smithson used to say, and so say I, although it is a question whether he is not the more culpable of the two. If it were not for Gaynall and his tribe, roguery would not have so many votaries; petty larcenies and

wholesale robberies would not be of so frequent occurrence, since if the perpetrators possessed not a certain and secret method of disposing of their plunder so as to clude the grasp of justice, they could not long escape her clutches, and one of the most potent temptations to commit the crime would be gone, were there no unprincipled purchasers of the proceeds at hand, always ready to wink at and screen the whole transaction. As for Gaynall's establishment, it might justly have been styled over the doorway—"Receptacle for stolen goods." That the reader may not consider me to be judging harshly or hastily, let me add that it was the opinion formed after a two years' abode within its walls.

When I had recovered from the shock which my sudden transition from Mr. Gaynall's counter to the drawer underneath, had caused my feelings, I fell into a train of very sober moral reflection on the mutability of things in general, and what chances and changes it was the lot of Pencil-Cases to endure in their career. My thoughts then naturally

wandered to Smithson, poor man; I wonder did he ever survive the ruffian's blow, or was it, for him, the messenger of death? Whatever might have befallen, from that day to this, I never have heard of, or seen him, and it has been with a melancholy pleasure that, in moments of tranquillity and rest, my mind has travelled back to the days when he and I were familiar friends together. "Should auld acquaintance be forgot," was one of his favorite ditties; surely he sometimes gives a passing thought to his old servant, perchance a gentle sigh of regret, or does he, like many others I have met with forget a by-gone acquaintance? Ah, well! be this as it may, I have uttered my last adieu; we shall never meet again.

Never! Never! Oh! it is a bitter word—a word which has made many a young heart beat with a crushing weight of misery; many a bright eye fill with the overflowing tears of anguish. Never! The very sound is that of a death-knell; the annihilator of gladness, joy, and hope; the forerunner of woe.

"Partion me, gentle friends, I am wool gathering a little." So now let us return to Gaynall and his highly respectable establishment.

I had not been long an inhabitant of the said drawer, (a day and a night no doubt passed, but both were alike to me) when I and my companions were duly removed for exhibition, with a host of other things, in the shop window. No sooner was I deposited there, then I commenced estimating my chance of finding a purchaser, sitting as it were, in judgment on myself. Counsel in favor declared that I was still a most respectable looking pencil-case, that my original superior construction had enabled me to withstand the wear and tear of time successfully, and that, were I offered at a low price, I stood every prospect of meeting with a genteel personage for a future owner. Counsel against avowed that the bruises I had sustained, not to mention other injuries received through an evil habit my first master had of placing my signet end between his teeth and turning me round with his hand while in a reflective mood, would extinguish every hope I

might otherwise have formed of again moving in the superior class of society. At length I came to the philosophical conclusion of leaving the matter in the hands of fate, since I myself had no control whatever over my subsequent destiny.

It was my misfortune, while in the shop window, to lie groaning under the weight of a flute, one of whose keys just lay transversely on my poor back. But the flute was a gentlemanly flute nevertheless, and pitying my situation, did all in his power to alleviate its sorrows and make the day pass lightly on. Amongst other ways of diverting the time, we amused each other by telling our previous adventures.

The flute said he had once been the property of a young professor of music who prided himself much on his handsome face, well-proportioned figure, and finely flowing locks; "to tell the truth," remarked the flute confidentially, "he considered himself quite a lady-killer." In his profession, of course it fell to his lot to have the tuition of several young



took the place of tuition, ogling of playing, and at last love, deep, passionate, and ardent, superseded mere acquaintanceship.

"Thus, my master," said the flute, "effected his primary aim; his next was to make the young lady his wife. He proposed an elopement, but the fair damsel absolutely shricked at the idea, on which her lover declared he was 'only in joke.' A clandestine marriage was suggested, and this she was averse to also. Vainly my master urged that, being an only daughter, her father would quickly forgive and forget. There was only one course, formally to demand from the old man, the hand of his daughter; and to do this, was more than my owner, with his plentiful stock of assurance could bring himself to, for the old gentleman had a rich suitor in his eye, and would about as much dream of giving his daughter to a music-master as of putting his own head into a lion's mouth. Finally, he triumphed. mown to her parents, the young lady forsook her to share his fortunes, and to make a long story they were married. Having nothing of their

ladies; one of these, the daughter of a wealthy country centleman, was exceedingly attractive in her appearance; her good looks, together with her flourishing prospects, quite won my master's heart, and he at once commenced a regular siege of hers, not doubting that, backed by the charms nature had bestowed on himself, he should eventually succeeds in spite of his being a poor music-master, and she a rich heiress. Never was pupil more apt; she quickly became a proficient on the piano-forte. Her parents, delighted with the rapid progress she had made under his tuition, invited him frequently to evening parties. Master and pupil than sang duets, played concerted pieces for piano and flute, and, in fact, found themselves very much together. The music lessons continued, and while alone, as they frequently were, papa and mamma little thinking what dangerous things a piano-forte, a flute, and an accomplished young man were to leave with their daughter, the division between the instructor and the instructed gradually gave way; conversation

took the place of tuition, ogling of playing, and at last love, deep, passionate, and ardent, superseded mere acquaintanceship.

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own, the couple lived on credit and great expectations, and for a few months cut a dash in a distant town; love evaporated, debts increased; my master cursed his stars and took to gaming; his wife asked and obtained pordon of her purents, forsaking him with as much facility as she had her paternal dwelling a short time previously. He, like a madman, sought not a livelihood from his talents, but wasted whole days and nights at the gaming table. To procure the wherewith to play, everything he possessed, down to the very clothes on his back; were converted into money at the pawn-broker's. I was nearly his last available article; he cherished me to the end. With hands trembling from feverish excitement he would take me up and play some sir that in happier days his faithless wife had loved. then would the tear steal down his cheek and then would a resolution escape his lips to turn from the evil way; yet was it empty breath: regularly as the hour came round, so surely would he step forth to run his mad career, and when every other resource failed him, I came in my turn to this horrid place.

Who can tell," said the flute, "what has now become of him? He has either committed suicide or wanders an outcast beggar; for such a course as his could lead but to one of these alternatives."

Among the many other tales which were related by my neighbours of the shop-window, I was particularly struck by one connected with a weddingring.

"Mine is a sad story," said the ring, "but since you all request it, I will willingly make the narration.

"I was originally purchased to take part in the matrimonial union of a young sailor and his merry sweet-heart; and it was with a glistening eye of pride and delight that he slipt me on her finger before the altar. She was the daughter of a veteran tar who had fought in many of his country's battles, the solace of his age, the only companion of his declining years, and, as I afterwards learnt, it had been with great reluctance he consented to her marriage, although the object of her choice was, like himself, a

child of the deep, and hence more preferable in his eyes than any other suitor.

Oh! what happiness was theirs. Loving and beloved, time flew away in one perpetual round of enjoyment. At length the youthful sailor joined the crew of a ship bound for New South Wales, and to remain on duty there for a protracted period. He was anxious his wife should accompany him, but parental love, ' and the earnest wishes of her venerable father induced her to remain with him. "Leave me not alone!" cried the old man, with tears in his eyes-"alone to die friendless and comfortless, with none to watch over my dying-bed." It was with bitter tears that the newly-married pair parted. "God be with you. Jack, and bless you," said his father-in-law, "I shall not see thee again." And with this benediction, the sailor seized his bundle of necessaries and rushed from the house.

What anguish must have racked the heart of my mistress at this parting: all that night did she weep and weep; yet, still the fountain of tears dried not

up. The comforting words of her parent, that her husband would soon return, safely and well, gave no comfort to her soul; her grief was left for time to cure, and alas! to increase. Six months from this period, the old man became seriously ill; his daughter, with true nobleness of nature, threw her own weight of sorrows off to lighten his, to watch unceasingly by his side, to be to him all in all. her anxious solicitude was of no avail; within a week he died, and with his death ceased the half-pay pension which the veteran had received through life, and which formed the means of support for father and daughter. Thus reduced, and straitened by circumstances, no husband near to earn a maintenance, the sailor's wife betook to needle-work for a livelihood; and hardly did she struggle against fate. But she struggled with success until she gave birth to an infant; the expenses attendant on this event shackled her future efforts. To pay off the debt and to keep starvation at a distance, seemed an impossibility. Hope, visionary, groundless hope, that her husband would soon be back, upheld her in her efforts. At

length, driven to desperation and absolutely in need of money to purchase food for herself and little one, she pawned a shirt that she had in hand to make, resolving to labor her utmost to regain possession and return it with her other work at the appointed time. The day came, and she had no means of liquidating the pawn-broker's demand. What was the consequence? Her employers, not hearkening to her sorrowful tale of want, immediately charged her with the theft and bade her quit the house at once; she received not a penny for the other produce of her needle.

To what a sad condition of misery was she now reduced. She returned home, looked at her sleeping babe, and burst into an agony of tears—"How can I, I a thief," she sobbed, "dare to seek for other work; Heaven help my forlorn infant; as for me, I will com—." She glanced at her wedding-ring, and instantly was on her knees praying for help to her Maker, praying that her husband might be restored to her in that hour of need, praying that this cup of bitterness might pass from her. She had disposed

of all her extra wearing apparel; the few trinkets her lover had bestowed on her, even a medal her father had worn, the gift of a grateful country to one of her brave defenders, nought was left, nought but me, her wedding ring, the pledge of her once happy union! "Sell me? No, no, never," she exclaimed; -"Sooner would I part with life itself." Poor soul; she little knew to what deeds maternal affection would drive her; necessity has no law, and finally, she converted myself into money at this place; she gave me a parting kiss, clutched the gold, and left the shop in a frenzy of despair. When this is gone," I heard her utter-"when this is gone, merciful goodness, what is to become of me?" As for Gaynall, he beheld the scene with all imaginable unconcern, told the woman not to "take on so," and bundled me into his receptacle drawer. I have been here now three months, and there seems little chance of my ever being redeemed.

The tale of the ring filled us all with feelings of sorrow and sympathy for the poor young sailor's wife. For my part I could think of nothing else for several weeks after, ardently longing for a time to come, when the owner of the ring, accompanied by her delighted husband, might reclaim her property and be restored to a life of happiness. Hopeless as the event seemed, it was my good fortune to remain in Gaynall's shop to witness its realization.

CHAP. XIII.

INTRODUCING ME TO ANOTHER SCENE.

DAY followed day, month rolled after month, in the same tedious unvarying course; I still lay idle in Gaynall's window, and not a single purchaser appeared for a pencil-case, so that I seriously began to think that my chance of taking an active part in the world was gone for ever, that I was henceforth to undergo a species of living entombment, which galled me exceedingly, as I had always been of an industrious turn, scorning a sluggish, do-nothing existence. Meanwhile, I was, from my quiet corner, a silent observer of all that passed in the shop, daily adding to my experience and knowledge of human nature, making my own deductions, laughing at, pitying and despising by turns, the actors in the scene; old men and young men, great thieves and little rascals, children of poverty, misery and misfortune, all came in their turn. Husbands pawned their household furniture for the avewed purpose of procuring drink; wives disposed of their very clothes to support a starving family; pickpockets brought their pilferings; haggard, grey-headed beings offered cast-off apparel, which had been bestowed on them through charity; respectable-looking middle-aged persons raised money on their Sunday coats, and redeemed them at the week's end; beardless boys too, frequented the place with something to turn into money. From each and all, Gaynall contrived to get a very good picking; nothing was too little or too large for him to have a deal or exchange for. He was always, always ready; behind his counter with his little sinister eyes, there he stood, a kind of land-shark preying and fattening on his own species.

Oh! he did fatten; he kept his country house and his comfortable little carriage. His wife, a lowborn woman dressed in silks and satins, vying with the great ones of the earth; the young Gaynalls (the scions and sprouts from this evil tree, watered so luxuriously, so horribly luxuriously) were being reared and educated far above their station; in short, Gaynall had wealth, and what will not wealth do in the hands of the vulgar.

One day I was in the midst of a serious cogitation when there came up to the shop window, a fine handsome fellow, with an interesting-looking woman leaning on his arm; both gazed very earnestly through the panes as though intent on discovering some article within. The eyes of the youth rested on me for a time, and I felt that I should be particularly felicitous in the service of such an open honest-countenanced personage, should he deem me worthy of purchase; but I was mistaken, they were not on the look out for pencil-cases. Shortly afterwards, the couple entered the shop. From his blue jacket and trousers, natty neckerchief, and rolling gait, it was evident the man was a sailor.

"My wife tells me as how she sold her weddingring to you some months back, old gentleman," said he,—"perhaps you will favour us, if so be as you have it on hand, by tipping it over, and then we'll see to the reckoning." "My good Sir," replied Goyanil, deferentially (fire he saw he had a bluff customer to deal with), "how is it possible I should know the identical ring, from the number I am in the habit of receiving! I shall be happy to sell you one,"—and so saying he busied himself in the shap window.

"Gracious." I exclaimed to myself, on hearing the above, "surely these must be the master and mistress of the ring, that told us so melancholy a tale some time ago; they accord well with the description." In a great flatter I drew the attention of the ring to what was passing, for, as fate would have it, it still lay near me. The poor thing, from the remembrance of misfortune, had sunk into an apathetic heedlessness of what was going forward in the shop, and it was with difficulty I aroused its sleeping senses.

"That is, that is my dear, dear lost mistress," cried the ring; "oh! that I may be restored to her, once more to encircle that taper little finger." I myself was overjoyed to think my suppositions had been correct, and anxiously looked forward to the result.

"Well, Nelly dear," continued the sailor, "what the gentleman says is fair enough; "depend upon it we shall never find this same ring, so suppose we buy another?"

"Depend upon it we shall and will find it, if it has not been sold," observed his wife, energetically. "Do you think I should ever have disposed of it had I not previously marked the ring to recognise it hereafter?"

"Oh! you marked it, did you, Nell? Then if his honor will be pleased to shew us all the weddingrings he has now in his possession, mayhaps we may have a chance of lighting on it."

Gaynall seemed to grudge the trouble, but the prospect of making himself richer at the expense of the open-hearted tar, sustained him under it; therefore he collected them from the heap of trinkets lying near me, my friend among the number, and spread all on the counter before the merry couple. How they sorted and hunted them over; now the husband would pick up one with some conspicuous scratch, and offering it to his wife, ask her if that

was it? Then would she throw it down with an impatient "no," and proceed with her seemingly fruitless search.

"Here it is, here is the dear pledge of our union, Jack," said she, and saying so, exultingly held it up to her husband. "Do you see that mark?"

"Now you have pointed it out to me I do," replied the sailor; "but no other eyes but yours, Nelly dear, could possibly have discovered it."

The worthy Gaynall then suddenly recollected that he had kept that particular ring with prodigious care by him; he well remembered the lady bringing it, and how urgent her request to him not to sell the article. Taking this into consideration, and knowing how anxious the pair were to become re-possessed of the ring, he only asked double its value as the price.

"Where is your conscience, you old rogue?" cried the sailor indignantly, whose British blood appeared quite fired by the outrageous demand. "There, take that," said he, throwing down the cash on the counter, "that's more than the original price."

Paying no attention to what Gaynall had to say, he slipped the ring on his wife's finger, and tucking her arm within his own he abruptly left the shop telling him to do his worst.

I admired the youthful sailor for his boldness, although he was not exactly justified in the act. The pawnbroker soon recovered his equanimity, and quickly forgot this heart-stirring scene in the hurry of business. But I did not; it had been a weary while since I had witnessed so much happiness as appeared to occupy the breasts of the married pair. Misery in all its diversified aspects, had alone met my view. I felt, I must confess, absolutely jealous of the ring at its good fortune. Why was it that I could not be respited? why could not I participate in such joy? The feeling was unworthy of me and I speedily checked it. Because a companion in misfortune was rendered happy, did it anywise increase my own unhappiness? No! Ought I not then to have rejoiced at the event? Yes! And to have thereupon founded some hope that I in my turn, might exchange my sad condition for a more pleasant

one? Yes! Then I will do so henceforth, I soliloquized. Jealousy, jealousy, jealousy, what a ridiculous bugbear thou art.

"I wish this babbling old pencil-case would keep his moralizing a little more to himself, and continue his confessions without any more interruptions of the kind," observes some impatient reader. My friend, I rejoin, it is an excusable failing; bear with me a trifle longer, and I shall have ceased my prattle.

It was about two months after the departure of the ring that my hopes and expectations of freedom, were renewed by a young man coming into Mr. Gaynall's establishment and inquiring for a pencilcase. "Must'nt be too high priced," remarked the would-be purchaser. "A sovereign a week will not afford much for the luxuries of life," he continued facetiously, and laughed. Gaynall laughed too; his was a marvellous countenance, it could laugh and look serious, frown and smile at a moment's notice. "The very thing you want," observed he, placing me on the counter. The other took me

up to honour me with a survey, which gave me an opportunity of honouring him in a similar manner.

He was a wheezen-faced, yellow-looking individual, appearing much older than he really was. He wore a smartly cut coat, rather the worse for having been made so long, a waistcoat, the majority of the buttons to which had lost their coverings, and a trowsers very glossy and greasy at the knees, ornamented moreover, here and there, with sundry blotches of ink; there were two or three pins in his coat collar, and a quill peered out from an inner pocket. Altogether he was not of an inviting appearance, "but," thought I, "any master, any life, rather than the present." A good deal of haggling had to be done before the stranger and my owner could come to terms, when the former had succeeded in beating down Gaynall to about half his original demand he purchased me, and in a twinkling I was at the bottom of his pocket. How I gloried. What cared I the life that was to come, or the circle I had to move in? I was free from Gaynall's hateful clutches, free! with the world before me again.

My new master hastened away, as I supposed to his dinner, for I heard a great clattering with a knife and fork; if so he was dining by himself. Shortly afterwards we were in motion again, and the next time I saw the light it was only an apology for it, in a dark back room, the clerk's office, as it afterwards proved of the firm of Quillpen and Redtape, attorneys. There was a square desk in the centre of the room, with a screen at the one end; there were likewise four stools; dislocated looking things, with long legs and small heads: my owner occupied the one; a grey-headed sexagenarian, with a partiality for snuff-taking and apple-eating. another; and a third formed the bodily support of a sprucely dressed personage, with an extra allowance of gold chain and shirt pin, young and handsome in person, very dashing in his talk; the fourth stool by the side of my master, was unoccupied, as far as human flesh and blood went; dust, spiders, and cobwebs seemed to hold temporary possession.

"And so," thought I, "here I am in the place of all others which Smithson detested, a lawyer's office; at all events, it cannot be worse than the pawnbroker's shop, and poor expectations generally improve just as flattering hopes are doomed to disappointment." This brief soliloquy passed through my mind as I lay on the top of the desk among a lot of musty smelling parchments, stumps of quills, rusty steel pens, and other things too numerous to mention, it was not long ere my master took me np; sliding my pencil out he proceeded to use me in ruling paper.

"Bother," he cried impatiently; it so happened my point was broken, and I could not do his bidding. "Bother," he exclaimed again, when he commenced renovating it and found that the lead pencil was all gone.

"Pendrive," said he of the gold chain to my master as he placed me again on the desk, "here is a confounded bore; this pile of prosy old deeds to be abstracted. Redtape wants the thing done by to-morrow night, and I say it can't be done—it cannot be done, Pendrive," he repeated, striking the desk with a ruler that he had in his hand, and laying appalling emphasis on the "not."

"You know best, Sir," was the reply.

"Pendrive," continued the other, "you are a good fellow (a sentiment which my owner did not at all contradict), could you not help me a bit, eh! after hours, eh! Pendrive? Precious unlucky; the hounds meet near Tom Goodfellow's house to-morrow, and I promised faithfully to be with him at breakfast, and the long and the short of it is I must go, let Redtape say what he pleases."

I very soon discovered that this young man stood on quite a different footing at the office to the other clerks; while Messrs. Quillpen and Redtape paid them for their services, he paid a good round sum for the honour of sitting at their desk, nominally, as I understood, to be initiated into the law; practically, to do and learn next to nothing; in truth he was an articled clerk, and everybody knows what an articled clerk is. There were several droppers in inquiring for Mr. Quillpen or Mr. Redtape; each had an audience in turn. By and by came an old man, who, being told the gentlemen were engaged, took a seat, and waited his opportunity. My master

quickly ran up stairs, and was not long in returning. -" You can see the governor, now, come, toddle up," said he, addressing the old man. "His is a hard case, if you please," observed my master across the desk to Mr. Thicked, the articled clerk. "Quillpen has been writing to him for a paltry debt due to that stingy old tallow-chandler Mould. I took the letter myself, and the poor wretch said it had not been owing a month, and he fully intended to pay it in a few weeks. But that would not do for Mould, he must have a writ, so the governors sent for one, and here I am just copying it out for service. I thought I would run up and tell Quillpen the old fellow was here. I expect to hear the bell rung every minute for this copy," and away went Pendrive's pen over the paper with breakneck speed.

"It is a hard case," observed Mr. Thicked, who was at that moment drawing a fancy portrait in profile of an imaginary being on the side of his pad.

"It is a hard case," repeated my master, "but I have known many worse. To be sure, if proceedings are gone on with the old man it will ruin him, and

be the death of his poor sick bed-ridden wife. Still that was nothing to the affair that happened here the other day with young Spriggs the joiner. Spriggs was a hard working honest——"

The sound of Quillpen's bell interrupted his tale. "That's for the writ," said he, and off he went up stairs with the document in his hand.

CHAP. XIV.

WHICH IS MOST POSITIVELY THE LAST, BEING FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL MY BEADERS.

"You were going to tell me something about one Jack Spriggs," observed young Thicked to my master, when the latter had resumed his seat on the high stool.

"So I was: well, as I was saying, Jack Spriggs was as upright and honest a young fellow as ever walked; he was a good workman and he bore a good character, and so he had not long set up in his trade of a joiner, ere he enjoyed a snug little business. He and his wife lived very happily together; they were not rich, but then, Jack had health and strength, and as long as he had hands to work with, there was no fear for the future; but the poor fellow was suddenly taken dangerously ill: his wife hourly expected his death. She was, how-

ever, saved this shock, to have her husband confined to his bed as helpless as a child for several Since, on him depended their competency, months. she soon found a difficulty in meeting the many demands on her scanty purse. Misfortunes never come singly they say, and thus it was with them; every one to whom they owed any little bill, sent in his demand, thinking that if Jack died, there would be no chance of getting the money. It was to no purpose that the sick man promised to discharge all the moment he could resume his avocations, or that his wife pleaded their present utter inability; the tradesmen pressed the more, and with great exertions, the more urgent were satisfied, while the claims of the others were postponed for a time. The last applicant had scarcely left the house, the couple were congratulating themselves on the event, hoping for the best and trusting for the future, when there came a demand from their landlord, that unless the rent due was paid in twenty-four hours, a distress would at once be lodged for the amount.

The intelligence threw poor Mrs. Spriggs into

a paroxysm of grief, she had sought to conceal it from her husband, but he quickly perceived the cause.

"Go to him—down on your knees to him," said the sick man; "surely his heart is not made of stone; he will listen to your entreaties. Tell him, Jane, it would be my death to be turned out of doors in my present condition, and if he has the feeling of a Christian he will wait a little while for his money."

The wife fulfilled his request; but fruitless were her tears and prayers; they had no effect on the miserly curmudgeon. She asked for a month's grace, a fortnight, a week; but no! not a day.

"Don't tell me about your husband; this is the way with you all, coming and begging, and blubbering. I must have my money to-morrow, or the bailiff shall sell the rattle-traps forthwith."

Poor Jane Spriggs returned home and saw that ruin was inevitable.

"It is the will of Heaven," cried her husband, when she had communicated the sad result to him; "we must submit. There is still hope; perhaps the man's heart will relent towards us."

It did not; Jack was driven to a hospital which he had lately left, absolutely in want of bread, and his poor wife died in the workhouse, some say of a broken heart.

"What is all that talking about," cried a harsh voice from the up-stairs landing.

"Oh crikey! that's old Redtape," genteelly observed my master, whereupon he made a gesture which, had it been made in his employer's presence would, I think, have seriously endangered Mr. Pendrive's longer continuance in his office.

The pens spluttered away for a few minutes over the paper, without interruption, but neither Mr. Thicked nor my owner seemed particularly gifted with the faculty of keeping their tongues still for any length of time. The silence was first broken by the former, who again complained of the quantity of work he had to do, and solicited my master's assistance to complete it.

"The usuals mind, if I do?" said Pendrive.

tickling the point of his nose with the end of his pen.

"Very good," replied the other, laughing; "by the bye, I believe I did not pay you for what you did last."

"I imagine you did not," observed Pendrive, in a tone which appeared rather to doubt any future more than any previous payment. At length it was satisfactorily arranged for both parties, the one to enjoy his day's hunting, and the other to be paid his due in the course of a week.

My master's mode of life out of office was peculiar; he had a good voice and could sing a capital song. Whether he was solicitous that so much talent should not languish in obscurity, I know not, but he regularly attended at nights in the smoke room of a well-frequented public-house, where, over a glass of spirits and water, he used to favor the company with sundry ditties, comic, sentimental, Bacchanalian, and otherwise, to the great delight of his hearers, with whom he seemed a general favorite, It never cost him anything for liquor—everybody

was anxious to treat Ned Pendrive. My master, too, was partial to a game at cards; neither had he the least objection to join in a match at bowls, or skittles on a summer's evening, with other similar spirits. These daily proceedings sent him frequently to bed in a happy state of oblivion, and when he rose in the morning, he was, of course, anything but fit for work; but Ned Pendrive did not care; he was never in the dumps, melancholy was a stranger to him; and as for sorrow, I suppose he only knew it by name. The reader may judge that I was not much enamoured with my avocation, to lie for hours on the desk, to be taken up now and then to rule a few lines, and then at nights to keep the score of a game at cribbage; this offered me but a dull daily occupation. It is true I was sometimes greatly entertained by the conversation of Mr. Thicked and my master, and likewise with the incidents which frequently took place in the parlour of the inn; I also gained a little experience in legal matters at the office, still it was just enough to make me dislike my occupation. The longer I

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stayed there, the greater was my surprise that people did not endeavour to keep their hands free from law. In Messrs. Quillpen and Redtape's office, nothing seemed to be done without pay, nothing, from merely answering the door on a client's first entrance, to delivering him his bill when he settled his account. Ah! speaking of bills, I used to see some pretty long ones, so long that it would take a good half quire of paper to contain them.

"Thank my stars; I have finished it at last," cried Pendrive one day, when he had completed copying one of these lengthy documents.

"What's that?" asked Thicked.

"Why, it's nothing particular; only this precious long account of the governors' against Simpkins, the cornfactor; our little demand, as Redtape says, when the client pulls a wry face at the total of pounds, shillings, and pence."

"Which we shall be happy to receive at your earliest convenience," continued Mr. Thicked, serio-comically imitating Mr. Quillpen's voice and gesture.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Pendrive; "I don't

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think, if a little demand of this sort was delivered to me, it would suit my convenience very quickly to defray it."

"Then I tell you what I think," observed the other, "that you would shortly receive a gracious requisition from the Queen, greeting, to appear before herself at Westminster; a piece of royal condescension which you might perhaps wish to transfer to some one else. But hark, that's Quillpen's voice."

As regularly as my master rose up from his seat in this hasty manner, so surely did I get a fall. He always jumped off his stool, and the lapel of his coat coming in contact with the corner of his pad would pull it off the desk down on the floor, and I was certain to take part in the mishap; consequently, my person received sundry serious bruises which caused me great uneasiness; but on such occasions I gave a retrospective glance at my life in Gaynall's window, and felt happy in my present condition despite its drawbacks. My friends have, doubtless, discovered my philosophical temperament long ago; yes, and though they may sometimes have smiled at my re-

flections, still I am well satisfied myself, and have found a great deal of contentment in them, if not real, at least artificial enough to deceive me; they have caused many wearily-passing hours to slip away with comparative swiftness and brought me comfort under circumstances which would have been deemed by one less easy in disposition, the most spirit-crushing and insurmountable.

- "The governors are sharp practitioners sometimes; very," said Pendrive, when he returned to his place.
 - "What's up?" cried Thicked.
- "Quillpen's door is open; I'll tell you presently. Here, old Step-and-fetch-it," said he in a jocular whisper to the apple-eating individual who was at that moment in the centre of a long sneeze, the result of a pinch of snuff, "get your hat and run with this writ to Bell-street and serve Scarfe, who keeps the little ribbon shop."
- "I understand," said the old man, moving to leave the room on his errand.
- "No you don't," said my master, sharply, "you're in too much of a hurry, Quickshins. Mind, if Scarfe

is not at home, ask when he will be at home, and if they say he will be in soon, tell them you will wait; and if they won't let you wait, loiter about the street and look out for him. Scarfe must be served to-day. There, get along, and look sharp with you."

He had scarcely made his exit, when Pendrive ducked his head down behind the green curtain which formed the screen, and said in a half whisper to Thicked, across the desk—"Why, the fact is this, Scarfe was served with a writ in another suit, last week, and when he came up the next day, they promised him his own time to discharge the debt and costs. However, this writ is for a demand of their own against him, and Quillpen just told me, if Scarfe called, to say the money must be paid in a week, or proceedings will be continued. Rather sharp that, eh?"

- "Too sharp to be pleasant," observed Mr. Thicked;
 "I suppose it will sew the fellow up. Will it not?"
- "I have known a good many more unlikely things than that happen," replied Pendrive, "the governors seem to have no pity for the poor wretch; save me

from the lawyers, say I;" a conclusion which I, from the desk, heartily echoed.

My master was one night (it was about a year and a half after I became his) returning from the scene of his nightly pleasures and festivities at the "Flask," when, by some inexplicable awkwardness, he dropped me in the street. He certainly was rather so so with liquor; still he was sensible enough to be aware of his loss, and immediately commenced a search for me; in so doing, he placed his heavy heel on my body, I rolled forward and he fell on his back in the street, seriously hurt, as I believe, in the fall. As for me, my onward course ceased not, till I had reached a grating, between the bars of which, I fell into a deep area below. There I lay, the whole of the night in mental torture indescribable. I had received injuries which never could be repaired; I felt that my career as a pencil case was closed, and that into whatsoever hands I came, nothing was before me except the prospect of being disposed of as old silver.

In the morning, the kitchen-maid, when sweeping the area soon met with me, and picking me up, shewed me triumphantly to her fellow-servant.

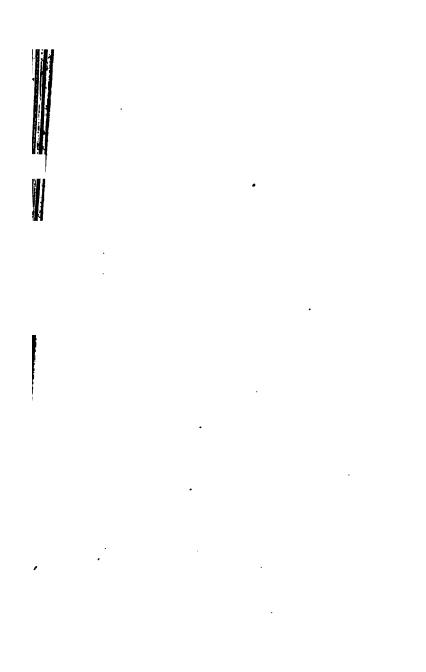
- "Look what I have found," said she.
- "What is it, Betty?" cried the other.
- "An old pencil case; I suppose it's silver!"
- "Oh, it's silver—it certainly is silver," said the housemaid, examining my shattered frame.
- "There, this is lucky," continued the finder; "I wanted a new thimble and scissors, and I'll get them in exchange for this old thing." (Old thing! the hussy, what business had she to call me an old thing?)

The girl was as good as her word; and so, gentle reader, here I am in a silversmith's shop, a disabled creature, surrounded by a heap of other articles in the like misfortune—broken rings, shattered spoons, and superannuated trinkets in momentary expectation of being consigned to the melting pot, to be transformed by the magic hand of the artificer into another body, again to take a part in the varied scenes of human life.

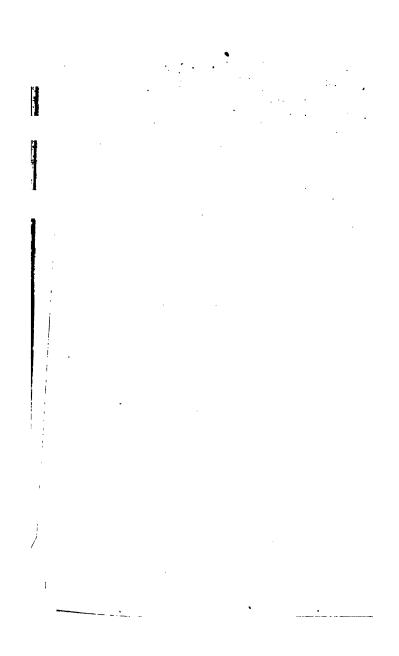
Thus, therefore, kind friends all, must I conclude my confessions. To such of my readers as have sympathised with me in my vicissitudes, I return my most grateful acknowledgments; while, of those who have esteemed my history a weary one, I humbly ask pardon, beseeching them to recollect that the infliction has, at all events, been but brief. And now the Pencil-Case bids to each and all a fervent adieu, wishing them health and long life, with blitheful hearts and homes to enjoy everything that they can desire, hope for, or anticipate in the shape of happiness during their sojourning in this changeable scene THE WORLD.

THE END.

G. NORMAN, PRINTER, MAIDEN LANE, COVERS GARDEN.







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